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Editors

Nigamananda Das
Chiramel Paul Jose

Editor-in-chief

Vijay Kumar Roy



World Association of Authors and Researchers

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Editorial

Experimentalism with a propensity for welfare and justice has resulted in progressive thoughts in the social groups of some nations but not at a mass level. We have already paid a heavy price for distancing ourselves from universal values that nature too tries to impart to us. We are going away from the origin of the delight. The truth of the interconnectedness of the elements of the universe does not get its prominence in social and academic discourse. Wordsworth tries to remind us: “The world is too much with us; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers; / Little we see in Nature that is ours” (“The World is Too Much With Us” 1-3).

Materialism has given birth to uncountable evils that keep on changing their forms in the course of time. COVID-19 is a poignant reminder of many things including the rise of illegal and evil practices meant for monetary gain. All kinds of ethics were tested and most of them failed. A kind of hollowness came before us. The words of Hopkins best extend this observation:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; (“God’s Grandeur” 1-5).

Even the terrific lessons of natural and man-made calamities fail to change human’s passions for worldly pleasures. This tendency creates but a feeling of emptiness at the end. Thomas Hood convinces us through his poem, “Autumn”:

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn; (1-5).

Literary texts are full of illustrations meant for peace and harmony in society but many times pride obstructs its way. With an example, William Watson writes in his poem, “April”:

April, April,
 Laugh thy golden laughter,
 But, the moment after,
 Weep thy golden tears! (9-12)

Tagore is relevant in the context of pride who writes that “pride in every form breeds blindness at the end . . . that is misleading” (*Nationalism* 1917). He advocates nationalism but with support of truth and spirituality. For him, nationalism lies in making one’s motherland a country of expectation not of segregation. Not only powerhouses are able to do it, other countries have also potentials for this achievement. For this, in the words of Tagore, “racial unity,” “the moral culture of brotherhood,” “man’s moral nature” and “moral adjustment” are necessary. Histories teach us that “man’s base passions of greed and cruel hatred” result in “ugliness” and destruction. The time has come for us to “discover our soul in the spiritual unity of all living beings” (*Nationalism* 1917).

Those countries that respected the “open and pluralistic conception of nationalism” and religion, they rose to higher level and others remained near the bottom (Tadd Fernée: “‘A Sea of Forms’: Mahatma Gandhi’s Reconstruction of the French Revolutionary Legacy”). Selective approach used since the time immemorial kept on creating some groups of people who think themselves above everything in society.

Instead of the authentic texts, their by-products get social eminence due to misconception and misinterpretation of the soul of society and help in emergence of misleading designs. Such misconceptions do not respect any geographical boundary. Sometimes mythopoeia tries to balance the secretive and unjust writings to open eyes of the few but the practice rooted in the society for ages is not easy to be uprooted. The habit of playing with scriptures for the personal gain continued in playing with the constitutions all with an ever cherished belief to keep the underprivileged groups far away from the mainstream. Literatures sometimes attract a few scholars to work in this field. Indian literature and African literature are seen producing good results.

This 10th volume of *Ars Artium* offers ten articles and a bouquet of poems. I wish you a very happy reading and peaceful and safe New Year 2022!

Vijay Kumar Roy
Editor-in-chief

The Newfound Politics of Robert Frost's "Mending Wall"

Mohammad Jalilian*
Hossein Nazari**

Abstract

Art has always been closely intertwined with politics, and throughout history many artists have protested, both through their art and their political activism, against unjust political actions. In recent history, the Vietnam War era saw the rise of political art, a prime example of which could be observed in the proliferation of protest posters in the era. The ascendance of Donald Trump to the highest political office in the United States, and the fierce opposition by many American artists to him, marked another chapter in the battle between arts and politics. Against this backdrop, this article aims to analyze the way in which one of Robert Frost's most famous poems, "Mending Wall" (1914), was appropriated by the anti-Trump media to criticize his highly contentious immigration policies. In so doing, this article discusses "Mending Wall" and some of its recent political interpretations through juxtaposing two articles on the poem published in *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*, respectively. We argue that in their attempt to either support or oppose the building of the wall on the US-Mexico border, the authors offer a blinkered view of "Mending Wall" to serve their own political agendas. Frost's poem, however, transcends the boundaries of reductive politics by leaving the narrative open-ended, which, in turn, encourages the readers

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to come to their own conclusions over the question of the wall—a fact that can account for the sustained interest in the poem since its publication.

Keywords: Political art, Mending Wall, immigration, literature of protest, Donald Trump, Robert Frost

Introduction: “Mending Wall” and the Politics of Being an Artist

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that art has always been political, and poetry, as one of the oldest and most popular art forms, has been no exception. Politicized art, however, is a different entity. In his influential 1935 essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, Walter Benjamin defines the politicization of art as the subordination of art to political life to advance certain political actions, mainly war (19). External elements deciding the meaning of a work of art based on contemporary politics and modern sensibilities do little to advance the messages contained within the art, and reduce it to just another weapon in partisan fights. Loading a work of art or literature with political messages renders it less unique and turns it into a tool in the hands of those with a political agenda to score political points against their opponents. Of course, politics has always been a part of art, but the subordination of art to politics alienates those with different opinions than the authors, and may even repel those who engage with a work of literature for purposes other than its immediate political function.

The use of art and literature for political means has perhaps never been starker than during the candidacy and presidency of Donald Trump. In order to discredit the man whom they saw as a threat to democracy, many artists and media decided to use works of art as cultural forces against his highly controversial politics. Poetry played a significant role in this respect, and was employed to juxtapose poetical excellence with the crude nature of Trump’s politics and personality. Some critics went so far as claiming that under Donald Trump the United States headed toward Fascism (Billet 2016, para. 15). What, however, was often overlooked was the fact that he was not the cause of this perceived decline in American politics, but rather the symptom of it. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Wall Street bailout after the economic crash of 2008, and the shipping of American jobs overseas made it existential for many voters to change the status quo, and many of them invested their hopes in Donald Trump as the agent of change. On the other hand, some mainstream outlets, such as Vox, regarded racism to be the main factor in his victory (Lopez 2017).

Robert Frost's famous "Mending Wall" became a rallying cry for those opposed to Donald Trump's notorious plan of building a wall on the border between the United States and Mexico. Obviously, the poem was written more than a century before Trump ever proposed such plans. However, the fictional argument between the two neighbors, one pro-wall and other anti-wall, was seen as a parallel to the cold relationship between the neighboring nations, both before Trump took office and after that. News organizations such as *The Washington Post* (Petri 2019) and *The Los Angeles Times* (Nazaryan 2016) took that opportunity to rail against his rhetoric about border-related issues by analyzing Frost's poem in a new light.

Indeed, not all the revived attention given to "Mending Wall" has come from those against the former president of the United States. Some outlets, such as *Classical Poets*, took advantage of the climate, and interpreted the poem in a wall-friendly manner (Mantyk 2019). Even Mike Pence, Trump's Vice President, used a recurring phrase in "Mending Wall", "Good fences make good neighbors", to make his point about the need for a wall (27, 45), as ironic as Pence's appropriation of the poem may sound, given that the poem suggests the exact opposite. The proverb, indeed, had existed long before Frost's poem, but given that "Mending Wall" had become a big part of the discussion around the border wall, Pence's use of that sentence could have been intentional.

This article, therefore, examines Frost's poem and a number of its political interpretations in the context of the discussions around building a wall on the US-Mexico border. Two articles published in *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* will be analyzed, compared, and contrasted to highlight the anti-wall narrative. The poem itself, along with an article by *Classical Poetry* will also be examined. This third article will be used to illustrate the pro-wall agenda. In the end, Frost's intentions, and each side of the argument concerning the wall will be explored.

"Mending Wall": One Poem and Many Interpretations in the Age of Trump

Frost was not willing to share the meaning of "Mending Wall," and wanted to keep that to himself (Nazaryan 2016, para. 10). In a piece for *Los Angeles Times*, Alexander Nazaryan alludes to this point, and attempts to understand the desire of Donald Trump and his supporters for building a wall, and its connection to the poem (para. 15). He puts Frost above polemics, and elevates the artistic qualities of his poem (para. 5). He also urges Trump and his fans to read the poem more carefully, so that they can understand the wisdom inside it, outside of the phrase that they liked to quote out of context.

Nazaryan sees Trump's coalition of voters not as a monolith, but as a group of people motivated by different objectives. After conceding that some of the people who voted for Trump are probably racist, he proceeds to say:

But many of those who support Trump are simply frightened; the wall represents a bulwark not so much against the Islamic State or the Sinaloa Cartel, but against the 21st century, blowing across the dark fields of the republic like one of those punishing New Hampshire winds that come in October and stay through March. (para. 15)

Nazaryan sees Trump's proposed wall and people's responses to it as more than a mere race-baiting tactic. He seems to be reluctant to give Trump supporters the benefit of the doubt, and assumes that they might have some real issues with the migrant flow from Mexico, but he does not resort to simple name-calling. He views their problem to be with the broader concept of progress, and that is why he urges them to read Frost's poem.

Alexandra Petri, in an opinion piece for *The Washington Post*, chose a different path. She made a parody of Frost's poem called "Good Pences make good neighbors" as a response to the aforementioned quote by Mike Pence (Petri 2019, para. 4). While Nazaryan's article was an invitation for the critical examination of Frost's poem, Petri settles for political jabs at her opponents. As such, her article offers little room for nuances or subtlety. Furthermore, Petri argues that Frost's use of the proverb "Good fences make good neighbors" was meant to be ironic (para. 3). However, the irony of the statement remains only a matter of speculation. In fact, one could argue that not only does Frost not provide any indication that irony was the reason behind the inclusion of the proverb, but also a more careful examination of the poem may indicate that he was not trying to portray the pro-wall neighbor as a figure to ridicule. In the figure of his neighbor, the speaker sees someone with whom many people can identify, even though Frost himself was not probably one of them.

In the closing of her mock-poem, "Good Pences make good neighbors", Petri writes:

He will not go behind his father's saying,
Nor should he; what was good enough for Dad
Is good enough for me, from measles to
The general threat of Nazis. Good. We need

The wall. We've got to build the wall. And I agree.

Good Pences make good neighbors. (para. 4)

Petri goes as far as equating a call for a specific measure of border control to the possible resurgence of Nazis. She views the supporters of Donald Trump as backward-looking people who are opposed to the many improvements made possible by modernity, such as vaccines.

The disposition to manipulate a work of art to your will is hardly a new concept. However, the manner in which such appropriation is carried out can serve as a telling factor. Nazaryan and Petri are both left-of-center writers, resistant to the idea that there is a need for a wall between the two countries. But while the former is unwilling to condemn all supporters of such a wall and brand them as racists, Petri takes the easy road and suggests that the whole movement is disposed toward Nazism. It is perhaps this same confidence in Petri that leads her to value her own interpretation of the poem above others' and drives her to the conclusion that Frost's use of the proverb "Good fences make good neighbors" was ironic.

It should also be emphasized here that the two pieces also adopt very different tones. Nazaryan's article is a serious piece about the dangers of limitations, especially in regard to the kind of people that we want around us. In the last paragraph of his article, he compares Trump with Frost, and argues that a demagogue like Trump uses walls for his own purposes, while an artist like Frost uses it to make something as thought-provoking as "Mending Wall" (para. 19).

Petri's piece, on the other hand, is a satire, and holding it to the same standard as a serious article would be unreasonable. Yet, since it was published in a mainstream outlet with a significant following, one would expect a fairer representation. Frost took great care in portraying the pro-wall neighbor in a manner that would probably seem fair and balanced to most readers of his poem. Petri, however, seems to have jumped to conclusion, portraying those supportive of Donald Trump, through the person of Mike Pence, as motivated by race.

Apart from Nazaryan's and Petri's interpretation, examining the poem on its own reveals larger truths. While the two authors, each in their own way, try to prioritize their own views, Frost lets both sides of his poem's argument to develop equally. While he evidently devotes more space to the view held by the anti-wall neighbor, who is also the speaker of the poem, this does not imply that he makes a caricature of the second, pro-wall neighbor. He communicates the neighbor's reasoning for such a wall, mostly through the aforementioned proverb, which is also the most well-known line of the entire poem.

Right-wing and conservative voices have clung on the proverb mentioned by Frost in his poem for obvious reasons. They may not necessarily assume that Frost was channeling his own thoughts through the pro-wall neighbor, but they use it without much thought given to the rest of the poem. That is also the case with Evan Mantyk in his 2019 “Trump’s Border Wall Revives Frost’s ‘Mending Wall’ (and a Poet’s Response)”, published in *Classical Poets*. Mantyk mostly focuses on criticizing the liberal co-optation of the poem, but in the end, he shares a parody version of “Mending Wall” that he had written called “Building Wall”. In his poem, he even takes some jabs at Frost himself, because he believes that Frost was mocking the pro-wall neighbor (para. 8). This, indeed, is a reductive reading of Frost’s poem and a blinkered view of what Frost meant to accomplish by his poem. In his poem, Frost refuses to prescribe what he thinks the best solution is. Rather, he develops both sides of the argument and lets the reader decide for themselves. This is a fact that seems to have escaped Mantyk and others who are willing to insist that Frost favored one neighbor over the other.

Toward the end of his mock-poem, Mantyk chooses to directly compare and contrast his beliefs with what he thought Frost incorporated in his poem:

No, it was Frost who had a wall in heart
That tore tradition’s timeless truth apart...
So if a man requests a wall, then build it.
It’s more than what you think you see that willed it. (lines 25-28)

Mantyk, however, seems to have misinterpreted Frost’s intentions. He believes that Frost only wanted to take the speaker’s arguments seriously, which is at best a dubious suggestion. While Frost might have been more supportive of the speaker’s stance himself, he portrays the other neighbor in a fair and even-handed manner. As Milton Reigelman wrote in *The Advocate-Messenger*, “Frost thinks the poem’s speaker and his neighbor are as balanced, morally, as the stones they together cast spells on.” (2019, para. 10)

Frost’s speaker makes his points for why he thinks there should not be a wall between the two houses. By saying “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall” twice in lines 1 and 35, the speaker makes his disdain for the concept of walls clear. Nevertheless, Frost does not foreground this view as the only perspective in his poem, even the only valid one. In fact, each time that the speaker uses the abovementioned phrase, the pro-wall neighbor answers with “Good fences make good neighbors.” A clear battle of the two different ideologies is at play in the

poem, and Frost does not use his own convictions to give more credence to one or another. This balance, therefore, can serve as a model and a clear example of artistic integrity that even the most partisan ideologues cannot corrupt.

Conclusion

For much of history, art and politics have been interconnected, and whether artists mean for their works to be viewed through a specific political lens or not, partisans of all stripes will find ways to appropriate them for their own political agendas. Frost's "Mending Wall" can serve as an apt example of the co-optation of literature for political ends. During an unusually charged political climate in the history of the United States, and with many discussions around the issue of illegal immigration and its possible solutions, both the left and the right tried to claim the phenomenal verse of Robert Frost.

Most of this article was dedicated to the analysis of the interpretation of "Mending Wall" by those in left-wing circles. The choice in doing so was, indeed, obvious. Since Frost allocates most of the poem to conveying the views of the speaker, one may be forgiven for mistaking that for Frost's own view, as demonstrated above. However, the durability of this poem is due to the fact that it leaves the door open for different interpretations. It would hardly be surprising if in the future people with opposing views used "Mending Wall" to advance their own agenda again. The issue of being welcoming or reserved, especially as a nation, can manifest itself in many different situations, and when it does, Frost's poem is there to make both sides of the argument all over again.

In a 2017 article about political art in the age of Trump, titled "Is Political Art the Only Art That Matters Now?" published in *Vulture*, Carl Swanson described the various ways in which some artists had tried to combat the President through art (Swanson, 2017). The antagonistic and blunt approaches of some of those pieces of art make us appreciate the delicate and subtle construction of Frost's poem even more. Frost is unwilling to offer his readers a black-and-white picture of right versus wrong, but rather chooses to draw the readers' attention to different views that can co-exist and be respectfully considered. Indeed, it is much more convenient to point a finger and tell others what to think; it is much more difficult to provide them with the tools they need to be equipped with to reach their own conclusions.

Ultimately, the lasting qualities of a poem that defy neat ideological boxes preferred by prejudiced parties always triumph over political manipulation and self-interest, as observed in the fact that Trump's age and all the controversies it

engendered have almost come to an end now, but the interest in the poem has not. If Frost's mission was to open dialogue between the different people who are represented by the two neighbors, then he has been successful. More than a century after it was published, "Mending Wall" still generates new views on important topics such as immigration. What happens in the future is unknown, but it is more than likely that Frost's "Mending Wall" will play a role in it again.

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A Comparative Study of Bharata's Theory of 'Rasa' and Longinus' Concept of 'Sublimity'

Kanhaiya Kumar Sinha*

Abstract

There exists a sense of profound literary depth that utters from the human capacity to make observations and judgements of an aesthetic nature. Interestingly, the qualitative structure of human embodied experience is determined by aesthetic perception. Literary works are read, evaluated, appreciated, or criticized by the Western, the Eastern, the ancient as well as modern readers. If there is any difference, it is of time, place, language, mythology, images, and cultural background of a country. These differences may pose some difficulties but do not stand in the way of appreciating a literary work as literature has universal appeal. 'Rasa' and 'sublimity' are the aesthetics associated with literature and ignite the dramatic emotional elements.

The main purpose of the paper is to attempt to revisit the two classical literary theories – of 'Rasa' and 'Sublime' – and explore a close affinity in the views of Bharata Muni, an Indian sage-poet, and Longinus, a Greek critic. The paper analyzes and compares these two theories from two different times and space as their object of treatment in the literature. For Bharata, it is 'Natyā' (drama) and for Longinus, it is 'poetry' (*kavya*) – the two classical forms of literary reflections of a creative genius.

Keywords: Aesthetic emotion, objective-correlative, *Rasa*, sublime, transcendental experience

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Introduction

The 'Rasa' (relish) theory, projected in his magnum opus *Natyashastra* (book for the theatre) by Bharata of Sanskrit Literature approximately between the 4th or 5th century CE (Gnoli xiv), enjoys the place of pride among the Indian Schools of Poetics. The *Natyashastra*, a comprehensive treatise and handbook on dramatic art, is considered to be the oldest extant work in Indian Poetics. Prior to this book, we do come across the mention of *Natyasutras of Shilalin and Krishnashvan* (Lidova 111-113 & Mehta 17) by Panini, the ancient Sanskrit Grammarian, Philologist, and father of Linguistics. Yet, it is Bharata who seems to have given a scientific analysis and codification of the concept of 'Rasa' (relish). According to him, 'Natyā' (drama) is the imitation of life (*lokanukruti*) wherein the various human emotions have to be dramatically glorified (*bhavanukirtanam*) so that the spectator is able to flavour the portrayed pleasure and pain (*lokasya sukhadukha*) as 'Natyarasa' (dramatic relish). This 'Rasa' experience will entertain and enlighten the spectator who hence becomes the 'Rasika' (art lover). Bharata's concept of 'rasa' appears to be reminding the persuasive words found in the invocation verse at the very outset of the religious book *Bhagavata Purana*:

Drink, o you connoisseurs (*rasika*) on earth who have
A taste for the beautiful [or: who have a poetic taste,
A taste for a language full of feeling] (*bhavuka*),
Drink again and again this *Bhagavatam*, this store-
house [of] aesthetic mood (*rasa*) (Vyasdeva, qtd. in Redington 3).

Rather than poetics, 'Rasa' was initially considered as an element of dramaturgy. The *Acharyas* (masters) of the 'Alamkara' (figure) school did not assign overriding importance to it. They recognize it only as an element of decoration. But, the passage of time and the process of critical speculations made the 'Rasa' to be identified as the central theme of literary creations (Patnaik 15).

Longinus' *On the Sublime*, on the other hand, is an important treatise of literary criticism. It has been acknowledged and regarded as a critical component that adopts a remarkably different standpoint from that of the most admirable utterances to be traced across all literature and hence "remains towering among all other works of the class" (Saintsbury 174). Longinus has been considered, after Aristotle, to be the greatest Greek critic. The function of poetry, before Longinus, was believed to be to instruct and delight and that of prose, to persuade. But, this taste of poetry and prose did not convince Longinus. He believed that the greatest poets and writers should

aim to instruct, delight, and persuade but their greatness lies in something else, and it is the sublimity of their thoughts. He emphasized that the effect of a lofty passage is not to convince the reason of the reader, rather to transport him. He further adds that the constitution of sublimity in literature should be the central argument of the text. And, he also gives a detailed elucidation of five principal sources from which sublimity is derived.

The concept of the term, 'the sublime,' attributed to Longinus, has been taken from his extraordinary essay *Peri Hypsous* which was later translated as *On the Sublime* (Dorsch 99). It was in this essay that the Horatian interest in the author became part of a critical trend and a romantic concern for the poet's inspiration came to its climax (Wimsatt & Brooks 97). And, it is not for nothing that Longinus has been called the first Romantic critic (Saintsbury 172).

Review of Literature

Patnaik in his book *Rasa in Aesthetics* (1996), while analyzing ancient Indian scholars' literary art, states that they created an innovative art, the signs, and symptoms of which culminate in the term '*rasa*,' and can be succumbed in one petite method. It is suggestive of the bread and butter of imaginative understanding and is enhanced by the conventional Indian concept of '*dhvani*' (sound) propounded by Anandavardhana. Portrayed and engraved in the meaning and excellence of predetermined forms and manifestations, the tinge of European art enlightens peripheral occurrence. Combined with Indian allegory and fable, the traditional art which constantly gets encouraged and refilled shows internal revelation and knowledge.

The Indian artists present themselves at the volume is known as '*rasa*' theory which Indian poetics refers to as '*alaukik*' or that is not the part of this world. '*Rasa*,' according to him, is theoretical, widespread, and continuing responses and emotions, whichever be its characteristics distilled by the artists and leads to an unfriendly pleasure similar to the utmost happiness curated considering the unconditional. The Indian artists, through their enhanced power of yoga, and meditation, inspire complete aloofness and universality of individuals subliming inconsistencies of passing emotions; evoking the universal vibes and feelings of '*rasas*.' The work of art, nicely filled with these, effectively delivers the message to the person utilizing it.

Dr. Pramod Kale in his book, *The Theatric Universe: A Study of the Natyashastra* (1974), while exploring each portion of the book and discussing its

relativity to stage production especially intended for the Western scholars, forgoes its theatrical discussions and focuses more on its practical content. However, he seems to be ending where the application and implementation of the theories begin.

Dr. Manomohan Ghosh, in his edition of the *Natyashastra* with English translation (1951) presents the standard translation for the Western academicians. He, in his edition, tries to create a complete and “literal as far as possible” English translation of the *Natyashastra* (Ghosh xxiv). His “literal” translation appears to be quite helpful; his introduction and commentary notes deserve equal value. Much of his translation and commentary deals with performance theory and theoretical ‘*rasa*’ theory and consists of perplexing terminology, sometimes with broad psychological notions. Also, Ghosh doesn’t come from a practical theatre background and he obviously, though his content is helpful, in some places, seems to be not writing for keeping theatre practitioners in mind. Here, Kale opines that this can lead to “often inadequate and misleading” conclusions as it deals with staging and characterization (10-11).

Sheldon Pollock’s book *A Rasa Reader*, the most recent publication on the history of ‘*rasa*,’ chronologically deals with the theory and philosophies of ‘*rasa*’ providing helpful latest translations from several sources, and thus, presents a variable roadmap of the evolution of the theory concerned. New translations and categorizations of the ‘*rasa*’ theory by Pollock are refreshing and useful and mainly revolve around chronicling theoretical ‘*rasa*’ through a “historical reconstruction” of the “aesthetic experience” (Pollock xi).

Mishra in his book *Coleridge and Abhinavagupta: A Comparative Study of Philosophy of Poetry in the East and the West* is of the belief that literature’s aim should be of creating aesthetic pleasure. He suggests that Longinus tries to communicate that a reader can only take himself/herself in an ecstatic world only if literature has a sublime effect. The power of sublimity, by moving and uplifting it, is capable of captivating audiences’ hearts and souls. It transports the readers from the outer world to the inner one by moving them from the world of disruption to attentiveness. The moment the audiences move to passionate understanding the pleasure of the moment freezes recognizing the individual self. The state of deep understanding can give inner happiness and cause joy to the audience.

The concepts of *Natyashastra* were also used by John Brown, a Western professor, director, and Shakespearean editor, in a modern Western stage setting. Brown, in his article titled *Shakespeare, the Natyashastra, and Discovering Rasa for Performance*, discusses his development of techniques by drawing “analogies between the assumptions about theatricality found in the classic Sanskrit treatise on

acting, *the Natyashastra*, and those of the Elizabethan theatre” (Brown 3). He proposes the existence of commonality between the two theatres – Shakespearean and Asian – and, to provide a gateway to Asian style and principles, uses the theory of ‘*Rasa*.’ He also acknowledges his experimentations to be based on the *Natyashastra*, but not a rigid extraction. The hybrid method applied by him is “Asian in genus, while being European in species” (Brown 5).

Richard Schechner and his colleagues at East Coast Artist are some other examples of contemporary Western application of the theory of ‘*Rasa*’ into theatrical method and practice. They organized an exercise and training programme called *Rasaboxes* (rasaboxes.org). Schechner presents its creation and use in his paper titled *Rasaesthetics* (27-50).

Analytical Study of Both Concepts

‘*Rasa*’ plays a key role in Sanskrit literary criticism. It is the essence of art and literature and it is, at the same time, the interconnecting link among all arts. Its significance has been acknowledged by all Sanskrit aestheticians in the appreciation of ‘*natya*’ (drama) and ‘*kavya*’ (poetry). Bharata, in his *Natyashastra*, the first available source of literary criticism in Sanskrit, recognizes the crucial role of ‘*Rasa*’ in aesthetics. In the sixth and seventh chapters of the book, he deals at length with the process of genesis of ‘*Rasa*’ through his famous ‘*Rasa sutra*’ or the aphorism on ‘*Rasa*’.

The creation of ‘*Rasa*’ is the very core of the Sanskrit ‘*Natya*’ theory. Every dramatic presentation was aimed at evoking a particular kind of aesthetic experience in the minds of the audience which is described as ‘*Rasa*’. The concept of ‘*Rasa*’ is the most important and significant contribution of the Indian mind to aesthetics. The study of aesthetics deals with the realization of beauty in arts, its relish or enjoyment, and the awareness of joy/ or ‘*Ananda*’ (bliss) that accompanies an expression of beauty; the closest explanation can be ‘aesthetic relish’.

The word ‘*Rasa*’ is derived from the root ‘*rasah*’ which means sap or juice, taste, flavour, and relish. The extract of the fruit is referred to as ‘*rasa*’ which itself is the essence, the ultimate flavour of it. Thus, ‘*Rasa*’ means the essence of all literature. It is the source of creative and artistic inspiration for both the author and the reader or spectator. Bharata explains ‘*Rasa*’ sutra in *Natyashastra* as: “*vibhavanubhava vyabhichari sanyogat rasa nispatih*” (line 32). This means that the aesthetic relish (*rasa nispatih*) is produced by a combination of the determinants (*vibhava*), consequents (*anubhava*), and transitory states or fleeting emotions (*vyabhichari bhava*).

Bharata explains '*Rasa*' as the essence derived from the different ingredients. He gives the parallel of extract, '*rasa*,' developed from various condiments, having different tastes, and when combined becomes delectable to taste.

'*Bhava*' (emotion) is derived from the root '*bhu-bhavati*', meaning 'to become', 'to come into existence.' In his theory, Bharata gives a causal quality to '*Bhava*', saying '*bhavanti iti bhava*' (Bharata opening prose lines). These are called so because they bring about awareness, and make conscious of '*rasa*' that which is "principally sought to be conveyed" (Bhat 95).

Bharata classifies the '*Rasa*' under eight categories (*ashtarasa*) and attributes the corresponding '*Bhava*' (emotion) which results in the creation of '*rasa*.' These are known as '*Sthayibhava*' or pervading stable emotions. They are '*rati*' (love), '*hasa*' (mirth), '*shoka*' (grief), '*krodha*' (anger), '*utsaha*' (heroism), '*bhaya*' (fear), '*jugupsa*' (disgust), and '*vismaya*' (wonder) (line 15). The corresponding eight '*Rasas*' are '*shringara*' (amorous), '*hasya*' (humorous), '*karuna*' (pathetic), '*raudra*' (furious), '*vira*' (valorous), '*bhayanaka*' (horrific), '*bibhatsa*' (repugnant), and '*adbhuta*' (wondrous) (Bharata, line 17). These eight '*sthayibhava*' inherit all human beings. They, deeply rooted in human psyche, are inborn and innate emotions, and cannot be attained through training or education. These stable emotions work as the centre of all other transitory as well as intense emotions like a king sitting in his court surrounded by his courtiers. The transitory and intense emotions resort to stable emotions as they are subordinated to or depending on them (Masson and Patwardhan 39). Chaudhary also describes '*sthayibhava*' in the same way:

permanent emotions (*sthayibhava*) ..., in dormant stage in all the human minds are basic instincts, and are fed by a number of minor feelings called transitory, accessory or auxiliary feelings. Permanent emotions in us are inborn. These emotions are not acquired by any experience or training and also are not born out of any emotion or feeling (Chaudhary 68).

Totalling to forty-nine, there are three types of '*Bhava*,' namely, '*Sthayibhava*' (stable emotion) of eight types, '*Vyabhicharibhava*' (transitory emotion) of thirty-three types, and '*Satvikabhava*' (divine emotion) of eight types. The '*Satvikabhavas*' are the physical manifestations of intense emotion. These are '*sthambha*' (petrification), '*svetha*' (perspiration), '*romancha*' (horripilation), '*swarabhanga*' (choking of voice), '*vepathu*' (trembling), '*vaivarnya*' (facial colour change), '*ashrupravah*' (shedding of tears), and '*moorchha*' (fainting) (Upadhyay 44-45). Bharata has given an amazing analysis of human emotions.

‘*Vibhava*’ is the cause (*karana*), the main stimulating cause which can be termed as ‘*alambana vibhava*’ (the determinant), and the environmental factors are additional causes which can be termed as ‘*uddipana vibhava*’ (the excitant). The nature of ‘*vibhava*’ is directly graspable by the senses and it is what generates an emotional state of mind (*bhava*) and its consequences (*anubhava*) (Patnaik 32). ‘*Anubhava*’ is the resultant physical reaction through action, word, and facial expression that follows (‘*anu*’) as the impact of the ‘*vibhava*’. The thirty-three ‘*vyabhicharibhava*’ (also referred to as ‘*Sancharibhava*’ in some editions of *Natyashastra*) are transitory, fleeting emotions based on psychological states of the mind. Several such emotions follow one after the other, one replacing the other, strengthening the ‘*Sthayibhava*’ at each stage till finally the ‘*Sthayibhava*’ is established and there is ‘*Rasanubhava*’ (experience of relish). “Just as in music a procession of notes in certain combinations reveals a characteristic melodic whole or *raga*, similarly, it seems that the representation of *bhavas* reveals *rasa* as an aesthetic whole” (Pande 313).

To understand this analysis clearly, let’s take the example of *Abhijanasakunthalam*, one of the greatest epics of Sanskrit literature written by Kalidasa. Here, Kalidasa uses King Dushyanta’s coming to the hermitage to pay respect to the sage as the ‘*alambana vibhava*’ (the determinant). The girls’ talk, their attire, the bee, the flower garden, and such other things become ‘*uddipana vibhava*’ (the excitant). On Dushyanta’s entry, fleeting emotions like confusion, wonder, fear, curiosity, bashfulness, and such others seem to fill the mind of all the characters present over there. The blossoming of love between Shakunthala and Dushyanta is gradually established through the reactions of both of them owing to the conversation of the ‘*sakhis*’ (friends of Shakunthala) to the king. If the ‘*patra*’ (character) enacting Shakunthala becomes able to display the ‘*Satvikabhava*’ of ‘*romanacha*’ (horripilation) or ‘*vepathu*’ (trembling) out of the new experience of love which is strange to an ashramite and Dushyanta becomes able to portray ‘*sthambha*’ (petrification) on seeing her beauty and ‘*romanacha*’ (horripilation) on knowing her lineage, then the ‘*rati sthayibhava*’ (love) gets established in the mind of the people who can experience the ‘*shringara rasa*’ (amorous) (Goodwin 109).

Bharata says that ‘*Bhava*’ and ‘*Rasa*’ are mutually dependent. The performer or producer, be it an actor, dancer, singer, instrumentalist, or stage craftsman, should be conscious of the ‘*sthayibhava*’ and the ‘*rasa*’ that they are striving to establish. This helps them realize their ‘*siddhi*’ (achievement) through ‘*Rasotpatti*’ (production of relish).

But, it is to be noted that this aesthetic relish, which is possible only through mental perception, is termed as '*natyarasa*.' Even the terms '*vibhava*,' '*anubhava*,' and '*vyabhicharibhava*' refer only to stage representation, not to the realities of life. It naturally follows that what these different '*bhavas*' produce in the minds of the audiences should only be referred to as '*natyarasa*' (sentiments pertaining to the dramatic spectacle). One can enjoy experiencing the emotions with the artists, and sometimes even visibly can express it by shedding tears or laughing spontaneously. But, both the artiste and the spectator are well aware that neither of them is going through it in reality.

In his essay, Longinus sheds light on what constitutes sublimity in literature. He regards art and literature for their transporting and elevating effect. According to Longinus, the sublimity signifies 'a certain distinction and excellence of expression, that distinction, and excellence by which authors have been enabled to win immortal fame' (Pritchard 358-376). He further says,

For the effect of sublimity elevated language is not to persuade the hearers but to entrance them; and all times, and in every way, what transports us with wonder is more telling than what merely persuades or glorifies us. The extent to which we can be persuaded is usually under our control, but these sublime passages exert an irresistible force and mastery, and get the upper hand with every hearer... a well-timed stroke of sublimity scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt, and in a flash, reveals the full power of the orator (Pritchard 358-376).

Both nature and art, for Longinus, contribute to sublimity in literature. He says that there are five sources or ways to get the state of sublimity in literature. They are grandeur or greatness of thought, capacity or ability to produce strong emotions, the appropriate use of figure or figural language, the nobility of diction, and the dignity of composition.

The sublimity of expression and sublimity of thought are linked with each other. Noblest thoughts produce noblest feelings and transport the mind. To achieve sublimity, noblest thoughts use the noblest state of knowledge. The use of true emotion at the right place and time inspires the words. The emotions are expressed through words and lead to the loftiness of utterance. But the fact is that they have to be the true emotions in the right place. And, the right emotions contribute to the uplifting of the mind. The rhetoric figures provide grandeur and Longinus is not concerned about the other effects of figures. Appropriate use of figures by the

writers creates a grandeur effect to the readers or the spectators. A figure becomes more effective when it is used in disguise. In *Othello*, while Emilia and Desdemona explain to Iago about the charge that Othello alleged on Desdemona, Shakespeare hides the figure to make it more effective:

Desdemona: Am I that name Iago?

Iago: What name, fair lady?

Desdemona: Such as she says my lord did say I was (Shakespeare 286).

William Shakespeare, as per the need of the subject matter, is par excellence in the matters of the art of expression, imagination, and use of language adorned and embellished. Prof. Upadhyay, while talking on the theory of '*rasa*,' cites a very good example from the *Meghdootam* where Kalidasa's '*Yaksha*' (demigod) sends a message to his love through the cloud:

O cloud, you will see river Narmada,
Spread out at the foot of the Vindhya Mountain,
Rough and full of the rocky hill,
Looking at the decoration on the Elephant body,
Made by scattered marks of painted strokes... (Upadhyay 41).

The above-cited verse gives us an idea of the ways of poetry being made effective with the help of apt diction and imaginative language.

Diction comprises the proper choice of words and the use of metaphor and ornamented languages. Words, when suitable and striking, display a moving and seductive effect on the readers and are considered to be the first things in a style to lend it grandeur, beauty and mellowness, dignity, force, power, and a sort of glittering charm, and are also considered to be the very light of thought. The arrangement of words blends thought, emotions, figures, and words themselves – the other four aspects of sublimity – into a harmonious whole. If the elements of grandeur in a work are scattered, it will be unable to lead to the experience of sublimity. So, it is the harmony of composition which makes a literary work effective to lead to sublimity.

According to Longinus, there is an intimate connection between the greatness of soul and the greatness of speech, and only the thoughts and emotions of noble minds can achieve the sublimity of literature. And also, only when the rendering of elements is noble, the work would bring the reader or the audience to a sublime state that literature offers. The sublime, in fact, play the role of an indicator determining the greatness of the author and the reader or the audience. Thus, the theory of sublimity offers a mechanism of the recognition of the greatness of a spirit, of the depth of an

idea, of the power of speech. Sir Philip Sydney echoes Longinus when he opines that 'For poesy must not be drawn by the ears, it must be gently led, or rather it must lead... And therefore is an old proverb: *Orator fit, poeta nascitur* (the orator is made, the poet is born). Yet confess I always that, as the fertile ground must be manured, so must the highest-flying wit have a Daedalus to guide him' (Sidney 5).

Comparative Study

Bharata's *Natyashastra* deals with dramaturgy in all its aspects and includes the topics of poetics, language, metre, figure of speech, literary flaws, stylistic qualities, and above all emotions (*rasas*) without which he said, nothing stirred in drama (Preminger 383). The theory of '*Rasa*' enjoys, from the viewpoints of Indian Aesthetics, utmost importance in poetry and expends considerable energy in analyzing the process of 'Aesthetic Realisation.' Bhattanayaka (850-900 A.D.) provides a new turn to this theory and floats the concept of Generalisation – a process that presents the characters and situations in their universalized forms (Goodwin 181). Abhinavagupta (950-1016 A.D.) brings this process farther and explains the experience of '*Rasa*' as the process of a unique encounter between the generalized subject and universalized object of experience (Arjunwadkar 90). The process of universalization that operates in both the areas of subject and object gets affected through the function of 'Suggestion,' a theory propounded by Anandavardhana (820-890 A.D.). He extends paramount importance to this theory in poetry. Apart from ascertaining that the experience of '*Rasa*' is affected through the operation of function of 'Suggestion,' he further maintains that all the other elements of poetry – the literary embellishment and diction, the technique and the mode of presentation – depend on '*Rasa*' for their emergence and sustenance (Higgins 50). It is said that '*Rasa*' is not implanted in poetry through the combination of different poetical elements, rather poetical elements are brought into being by '*Rasa*' in its endeavour to express itself. This naturally takes us to the doorstep of the 'Gestalt theory of Poetry' which describes poetry as an organic whole and is incapable of being classified into parts (Tsur 244).

While most of the Indian theoreticians after Anandavardhana follow the principle of 'Suggestion,' Kuntaka (950-1050 A.D.) and Jagannatha (a 17th century poet and literary critic) try to take a realistic view of the process relating to creation and appreciation of Poetry. Thus, Kuntaka emphasizes the concept of '*Vakrokti*' (Oblique Expression) which suggests the balance existing between the music of sound and the music of sense. He further says that though these two ('music of sound' and

‘music of sense’) try to excel each other in point of charm, the superb poetical talent of the literary artists does not allow the one to excel the other and thus a balance between the two is maintained (Kuntaka 88). Thus, we can, after having a close analysis of the viewpoints of different Indian theoreticians, say that the function of ‘Suggestion’ in poetry unfolds the symbolic content and continues till the ‘Infinite’ is arrived at by enabling the connoisseurs to experience the ‘Bliss’ associated with the ‘Absolute.’

Western Aesthetics also considers the experience of ‘Bliss’ as the aim of ‘Poetry.’ But, it fails, owing to the mental setup of its literary theoreticians, to arrive at the ‘Infinite’ that constitutes the seat of ‘Bliss’ and ‘Beauty.’ This failure takes place due to the difference between the philosophies of the Indian and the Western thinkers. The main philosophy which guides the Western thinkers is the philosophy of ‘Materialism’ whereas that of the Indian artists is the philosophy of ‘Spirituality.’ And, this creates a difference because while Indian theoreticians describe the experience of identity of the man with the ‘Infinite’ as the goal of human existence, Western thinkers put more emphasis on individuality and consider ‘Poetry’ as an expression of the individuality of the artist. But, credit must be given to ‘Western Aesthetics’ also as it has been able to present certain general truths that are in line with the Indian Aesthetics. Thus, Longinus gives profound importance to the function of ‘Suggestion’ and asserts that when the function of ‘Suggestion’ in a ‘Sublime Poetry’ is triggered into action it unfolds multiple layers of meaning and implants sublimity in the document of literary art. We have already seen how, for Longinus, the sublimity of ‘noble’ emotions constituted the value of literature, and ‘the stimulus of powerful and inspired emotion’ constituted the second source of the sublime. Before Longinus, Aristotle talked about the emotional context of literature which constituted the chief source of Sophocles’ tragedies. Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare* identified emotions as vulnerable constituents of Shakespeare’s tragedies. Wordsworth’s theory of poetry talks of ‘powerful feelings’ and ‘emotions recollected in tranquility (Wordsworth 57) as the substance of poetry. Coleridge, owing to the function of ‘Suggestion,’ describes poetry as an organic whole. At the same time he asserts that even if a single expression is dissociated from the structure of poetry, it makes the poet say something else than what he intends to say (Coleridge 304). Shelley, in his *A Defence of Poetry*, says that the function of ‘Suggestion’ converts the ugliest into the most lovely, enabling the refined reader to have experiences of ‘Beauty.’ I.A. Richards in his *Principles of Literary Criticism* talks of the ‘emotive language’ (Richards 101) for the sake of effects, and T.S. Eliot, a

modern poet, and critic, while talking of emotions and feelings, says that the business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and that 'Great poetry... may be composed out of feelings solely' (Winters 24). He further, while formulating a canon of the portrayal of emotion in poetry, states: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative, in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion, such that when external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (Joshi & Agarwal 43).

We should also note that while focusing on poetry, Longinus uses '*bhavas*' as emotions or capacity for strong emotions. The proper combination of '*Vibhava*,' '*Anubhava*,' and '*Vyabhichari bhavas*' in Bharata's theory are transformed to the theory of 'Sublimity' as the appropriate use of figures, nobility of diction, and dignity of composition. Bharata speaks of these elements and their combination in the structure of '*natya*' (drama) whereas Longinus speaks of the structural, figural, and linguistic aspects of the construction of poetry. The concentration on figures by Longinus in the first century A.D. can be seen in the later phase of Sanskrit aesthetics. Longinus' idea of 'Sublimity', the true effect of literature as resulted by the grandeur of thoughts and true emotions very well equates to Bhoja's concepts of '*ananda*' (bliss). In Bhoja's theory of '*ananda*' even '*Rasa*' is not sublime (De 22); it is the means to achieve '*ananda*,' and thus Longinus' speaking of the true or grandeur effects of literature tends us to think of a flow of aesthetic ideas from Bharata to Longinus to Bhoja. The influence of the figural and linguistic aspects of Longinus' theory can also be seen in the concepts of '*dhvani*' (sound), '*vakrokti*' (innuendo), '*auchitya*' (legitimacy), and '*sphota*' (opening) (De 28).

We should also consider the fact that in his shift from the classical Greek tradition in the aspects of the effects of literature, Longinus appears to be as highly influenced by the theory of '*Rasa*'. He regards literature as grand not for its ability to teach or persuade but for its transporting of man from material condition to a higher level of aesthetic experience. He seems to be appropriating '*Rasa*' theory to deal with poetry, but he also develops it. It can be argued that his idea on sublimity and the true effects of literature seems to be an elaboration of '*Rasa*'. Longinus moves ahead from the basics he gains from the theory of '*Rasa*' and proposes a higher state of mind just as the experience of '*Rasa*.' The 'Sublimity,' reflected by the grandeur of thought and other supporting elements which reveal the true nature of literary experience, resembles Bhoja's aesthetics of '*ananda*', the ultimate bliss which art and literature provide.

Conclusion

Thus, this brief analysis very well suggests that in ancient times there might be a transaction of ideas from East to West and vice versa. This argument gets support from the historical proofs of the transaction of trade between East and West in the olden days. J. M. Roberts, a British historian (1928-2003) rightly argues that “although...The mature art of Classical Greece was unique, its roots lie far back in the renewal of ties with Asia” and this proves that there occurred “a process of cultural interplays” (177) between East and West. He also points out the influence of Greece on Indian lands:

From Ashoka's era survive many inscriptions bearing decrees and injunctions to his subject. The use of the means of propagating official messages and the individual style of inscriptions both suggest Persian and Hellenistic influence and India under Mauryas was certainly more continually in touch with the civilizations to the West than ever before. At Kandhar, Ashoka left inscriptions in both Greek and Aramaic (Roberts 425).

It is to be noted that Ashoka was the Maurya king living in the 3rd century B.C. If he had used Greek, it is possible that Greek texts might have reached India, and Sanskrit texts might have been brought to the West in original or in translation.

Also, the spread of the great Ashoka's reign was mostly in the northern part of the modern Indian territory and he had influenced the Chinese lands too. It becomes clear, when we see all the Sanskrit aestheticians are from the land of Kashmir, that there was a transaction of ideas between Sanskrit and Greek literary genius. Hence, there is a possible underlying homogenous aesthetic ideal between the idea of ‘Sublimity’ and the theory of ‘Rasa’.

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The Archeology and Ideological Stances of Narratives in English Language Teaching Research

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Abstract

English Language teachers have been engaging in narrative analysis and using restorying as a technique to unravel their own and their peers previously storied learning-to-teach experiences, concepts, and self-understandings for about two decades now. One of the goals of narrative research in English Language Teaching (ELT) is to increase understanding of central issues related to teaching and learning through the telling and retelling of teachers' stories. Narrative research inquires into narratives made by the chosen participants. It utilizes story-telling as a way of communicating participants' realities to a larger audience. Narrative researchers collect data about people's lives and construct meanings with the help of their experiences. It is a methodology in which the researcher attempts to present the meanings of personal stories and events. Narratives can be good tools to understanding an individual's experiences and help ELT researchers to obtain an "insider view" on the issues of learning and teaching of English. Stories told by a participant also provide a deeper understanding of the issues that arise in the relationship between the participant and the researcher. The aim of this paper is to explore the history and the ideological stances of narrative inquiry, and revisit the growing popularity of narrative approach to ELT researches. This article discusses types, characteristics and techniques of narrative research in ELT along with the potential challenges of using narratives in ELT researches.

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Keywords: The archeology, narrative process, ideological stances, chronology of experiences

Narratives in Narrative Inquiry

English teacher education is amazingly linked with teachers' lives, and their narratives play integral role in narrative research design. Narratives serve as tools to study participants' lives in motion in narrative inquiry. Narratives and teacher education are pieces of the same cloth. This approach to research utilizes story-telling as a way of communicating the participants' realities to a larger audience. People live and lead storied lives. They tell stories of those lives. Researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experiences. Clandinin and Connelly in their book *Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (2000) state that narrative inquiry captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time, and takes account of relationship between individual experience and cultural context. In an article in 1990 Clandinin and Connelly argue that in narrative research designs, researchers describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives of individual experiences. In this method of inquiry, researchers give emphasis "not only on individuals' experiences but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin and Rosiek 42-43). According to Creswell, "as a distinct form of qualitative research, a narrative typically focuses on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual" (502). For Gay, Mills and Airasian, narrative research is "the study of how different humans experience the world around them; it involves a methodology that allows people to tell the stories of their 'storied lives'" (13). The researcher typically focuses on the individual chosen and gathers data by collecting stories about the person's life. The researcher and participant then construct a written account, known as a narrative, about the individual's experiences. It is through this narrative that the researcher constructs meanings. Since narrative research is collaborative, it is important for the researcher and participant to establish a trusting and respectful relationship. Another way to think of narrative research is that the narrative is the story of the phenomenon being investigated, and narrative is also the method of inquiry being used by the researcher. One of the goals of narrative research in ELT is to increase understanding of central issues related to teaching and learning through the telling and retelling of teachers' stories.

Narratives in educational and ELT research occupy a central space these days. Narrative Inquiry is an old practice but we consider it as a novel method in English language teaching research. Narratives are effective tools to unpack individuals' experiences. The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected from individuals as a means to understanding experiences as told by them. According to Ehrlich, Flexner, Carruth, and Hawkins, the term "narrative" comes from the verb "to narrate" or "to tell (as a story) in detail" (qtd. in Creswell 502). While using narratives in research, we systematically gather, analyze, and represent people's stories as told by them. Stories are the basic means to understand the world and effective ways of making the sense of peoples' experiences. We make inquiry into narratives in narrative research. Narrative researchers collect data about people's lives and construct meanings with the help of their experiences.

The Archeology and the Narrative Process

Although narrative inquiry "has a long intellectual history both in and out of education" (Connelly and Clandinin 2), the term "narrative inquiry" was first used in the educational research field by Connelly and Clandinin in an article published in *Educational Researcher* (1990). Narrative inquiry is the interdisciplinary study of the activities involved in generating and analyzing stories of life experiences (e.g., life histories, narrative interviews, journals, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies) and reporting that kind of research (Schwandt 204). Narrative research is the study of the lives of individuals as told through the stories of their experiences, including a discussion of the meaning of those experiences for the individual.

Connelly and Clandinin in an article *Narrative Inquiry* published in 2006 claim that the stages of narrative inquiry involve the field, texts on field experience, and the research text which incorporates the field and the texts and represents those issues of social significance that justify the research. We use narratives as methodological tools in ELT research in several ways. Usually, the researcher either collects (a) stories as data and seeks to understand underlying themes from the stories, or (b) descriptions of events through interviews, journal entries, documents, artifacts, and observations, and it is important that there is evidence of triangulation of data sources (Stephenson and Harold 156). The researcher then synthesizes the data into narratives or stories where the outcome is a co-constructed narrative between researcher and participants. Narrative analysis is a collaborative process in which the researcher and participants co-construct meaning throughout the research process. The narrative research process is, therefore, highly personal as it

requires a very close relationship between the researcher and the participant which needs to be mutually constructed and allows each voice to be equally heard. The major steps we follow while adopting a narrative design could be listed as follows:

1. Identify the purpose of the research study, and identify a phenomenon to explore.

The purpose of the study is to explore challenges Nepalese female English teachers face in their professional development.

2. Identify an individual (self or other) or individuals who can help you learn about the phenomenon.

Three female teachers of three different community schools in Kathmandu will be selected purposively, and interviewed with semi-structured questions. They have been teaching English at secondary level for ten years.

3. Develop initial narrative research questions.

I will explore the factors that hinder their professional development activities. Purposively selected participants will be asked questions such as: Have you ever attended any teacher professional development training? Have you taken part in workshops and seminars? Have you taken part in any national or international conferences? As an English language teacher how do you feel yourself in teaching profession? How do you manage your personal and professional life? What type of difficulties, being a female teacher, do you face in classrooms, offices? What are the factors that hinder your professional life?

4. Consider the researcher's role (e.g., entry to the research site, reciprocity, and ethics) and obtain necessary permissions.

The researcher should seek permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as any other permission required by the school. In addition, the researcher must ask teachers to sign an informed consent form.

5. Identify research design and develop data collection methods.

A narrative researcher will utilize a variety of narrative research data collection techniques, such as interviewing and examining written and nonwritten sources of data.

6. Collaborate with the research participant(s) to construct/co-construct the narrative and to validate the accuracy of the story.

To validate the accuracy of the story, narrative research necessitates a relationship between the researcher and the participants more akin to a close friendship. Establish a relationship between researcher and participant that is mutually constructed and characterized by an equality of voice. The researcher and teachers will collaboratively participate in restorying the narrative and then validating the final written account (restorying - a writing process that involves synthesizing story elements).

7. Write the narrative account.

The narrative research process is a highly personal, intimate approach to educational research that demands a high degree of caring and sensitivity on the part of the researcher.

Collecting Narratives: Types of Narrative Research

Casey in *The New Narrative Research in Education* (1996) opines that narrative research subsumes multiple forms. Before planning to conduct, a researcher needs to consider what type of narrative study to conduct. Narrative research has been a central method for a variety of research practices. For individuals planning a narrative study, each type of narrative provides a structure for conducting the study and ready references for how to conduct the project that faculty, journal reviewers, and book publishers will recognize. For those reading narrative studies, it is less important to know what type of narrative is being used and more important to recognize the essential characteristics of the types (Creswell 503). Researchers collect narratives through different means. Some major forms through which we gather narratives are presented in table 1.

Table 1 Types of Narrative Research Design

Types of Narrative Research Design (qtd. in Creswell 504)		
Autobiographies	Personal documents	Autoethnographies
Biographies	Documents of life	Ethnopsychologies
Life writing	Life stories and life histories	Person-centered ethnographies
Personal accounts	Oral histories	Popular memories
Personal narratives	Ethnohistories	Latin American testimonios
Narrative interviews	Ethnobiographies	Polish memoirs

English Language teaching researchers need to consider the following five questions in determining the types of research they are carrying out. The questions are: Who writes or records the story? How much of a life is recorded and presented? Who provides the story? Is a theoretical lens being used? Can narrative forms be used?

Ideological Stances and the Key Characteristics

Methodological and theoretical innovations in second language (L2) narrative research have yielded helpful insights into L2 learning and teaching over the past four decades. Reissman in *Narrative Analysis* (1993) views that narrative research has drawn attention since the 1980s, but only really gathered momentum since the early 1990s. Over the past two decades, narrative inquiry has become a common research design in several different fields including education, sociology, anthropology, history, women's studies, sociolinguistics, etc. There is increasing use of narratives in teacher professional development, teacher research and English education in general. It is only in the last 20 years that there has been interest in narrative inquiry in English language learning (ELL).

Researchers using narrative inquiry in EFL describe the lives of individual participants, collect and tell stories about people's lives. Narrative inquiry is much more than telling of stories. It entails telling and retelling of stories. The conceptualization of narrative inquiry Connelly and Clandinin developed in the education research comes from a Deweyan (1938) notion that life is education. Their interest, then, is in "lived experience - that is, in lives and how they are lived" (Clandinin and Connelly xxii). The following are the key characteristics of narrative design:

1. Individual experiences

The researcher often studies a single individual. Narrative researchers capture the experiences of one or more individuals. In addition to the study of an individual, the researcher is most interested in exploring the experiences of that individual.

2. Chronology of the experiences

Revealing a participant's past as well as the present and future is central feature in narrative research (Creswell 508). Narrative researchers analyze and report a chronology of an individual's experiences. When researchers focus on understanding these experiences, they elicit information about a participant's past, present, and future. Chronology in narrative designs means that the researcher analyzes and writes about an individual life using a time sequence or chronology of events. For

example, in a study about a teacher's use of ICT tools in ELT classrooms, the researcher would include information about the teacher's introduction to ICT tools, types of ICT tools teachers are using at present, challenges of using those ICT tools, difficulties they come across while using those ICT tools and future goals and aspirations. The story reported by the researcher would include a discussion about the sequence of events for the teacher.

3. Collecting individual stories

Narrative researchers place emphasis on collecting the stories told to them by individuals or gathered from a wide variety of field texts. These accounts might arise during informal group conversations or from one-on-one interviews. A story in narrative research is a first-person oral telling or retelling of an individual. Restorying is used as a technique for constructing the narrative account

4. Restorying

According to Creswell, restorying is "the process in which the researcher gathers stories, analyzes them for key elements of the story (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene), and then rewrites the story to place it in a chronological sequence" (509). Individuals share stories about their experiences with researchers but without attention to the real-time order of events.

5. Coding for themes

Narrative researchers code the data of the stories into themes or categories. The identification of themes helps the inquirer to understand the complexity of the story and individual experiences. The researcher identifies five to seven themes as all qualitative researchers do. After telling and retelling of the story the researcher presents the themes in passages.

6. Context or setting

Context plays the integral role to interpret the stories. Narrative entails understanding of experiences. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. In restorying, the researcher incorporates the time, place, plot and scene of participants' experiences or stories. The setting refers to the place where a story physically occurs. The setting in narrative research includes friends, family, workplace, home, social organization or school.

7. Collaborating with participants

Clandinin and Connelly in their book *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (2000) opine that the collaborative in narrative inquiry involves the researcher and the participants in the negotiation of the final text. Collaboration involves negotiating relationships between the researcher and the participant to lessen the potential gap between the narrative told and the narrative reported. Clandinin and Connelly further state that the collaboration incorporates explaining the purpose of inquiry to the participant, negotiating transitions from gathering data to writing the story, and arranging ways to intermingle with participants in a study.

The narrative research process is similar to the construction of a biography. Narrative researchers do not have direct access to observational data but must rely on primary data sources (the participant's recollections) and secondary sources (e.g., written documents by the participant). The data in narrative research are usually collected through interviews and written exchanges. Narrative research places considerable emphasis on the collaborative construction of the written accounts of the narratives.

Narrative Inquiry in ELT

In English Language Teaching (ELT) research narrative inquiry has emerged as a method through which teacher's knowledge and experiences can be analyzed. Regarding narrative inquiry in ELT, the book *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (2000) by Clandinin and Connelly presents that teacher's knowledge is largely structured through stories and that the story is epistemologically the most authentic way to understand teaching from the teacher's point of view. Teacher education is inextricably linked to teachers' lives, and their knowledge and professional competence. They are two leaves of the same tree. So, narrative inquiry and teachers' lives are interlinked. The stories made by English teachers help us to know who they are and how they became English teachers. The credit to spread the practices of narratives in teacher education goes to Clandinin and Connelly who introduced the concept in their groundbreaking article *Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry* (1990). Narrative inquiry studies teachers' lives in motion. Clandinin and Connelly (1996) in their article note that through telling and retelling, living and reliving teachers' own stories, teachers' lived experiences, including their knowledge and practices in educational reforms, can be interpreted and understood narratively. Teachers are the main agents of education. They involve

in debate, deliberation, and decision about what and how to teach through different community of practices and professional development activities.

With the help of narrative research in education, we can understand issues related to teaching and learning through the telling and retelling of teachers' stories. Narrative inquiry provides ELT researchers with an opportunity to validate the practitioner's voice in these important political and educational debates. The aim of narrative inquiry in ELL is

to explore the way in which people understand who they are and how they come to know and learn English; how to teach English and English literature; how to teach other people how to teach English; professional learning; and leadership perspectives and practices in ELL (Stephenson and Harold 156).

We use narrative inquiry in English language and teaching in many ways. Firstly, it can be used as a methodological approach when there is an interest and appreciation of people's storied lives and the chronological or temporal nature of events of experiences. Second, there is an interest in process and change over time. Third, there is an interest in the social dimension, the self, representations of the self, the concept of reflexivity, and an awareness that the researcher is also the narrator (Stephenson and Harold 2015).

Why Narratives in ELT?

Narrative inquiry has become popular in ELT research these days. Although narrative inquiry has become more widely used, it is also seen as controversial within the research community and has been criticized in relation to issues of subjectivity, reliability, validity, and generalizability. However, essentially qualitative research prefers different terms to those used in quantitative research such as trustworthiness, credibility, verisimilitude, and authenticity. These issues along with ethical considerations are now addressed (Stephenson and Harold 156).

Narratives of experience are an effective means to structure beliefs and practices of English language learners and educators into meaningful units and to make sense of the behaviour of others (Stephenson and Harold 156). Narrative researchers collect and describe the stories and write narratives of experiences. Hearing the voices and stories of individuals in the context of their own lives researchers get deeper insights about the social and cultural contexts found within the field of English Language Learning (ELL), English language teacher education, and leadership in ELL.

Researchers use narrative inquiry in ELT research to describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives about those experiences and the meanings of those experiences for the individual (Connelly and Clandinin). These stories not only capture the experiences of individuals but also empower the individual participants by allowing them a more legitimate and authentic voice. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience that allows the complexities, challenges, and ambiguities of our individual and collective life experiences to be linked to experiential inquiry.

Narrative inquiries are useful when we have participants willing to tell their stories and researchers want to report their stories. Personal experiences are vital to construct meanings in educational research and ELT research in particular as narratives offers practical, specific insights. By conducting narrative studies, researchers establish a close bond with the participants. This may help to remove the misconception in the field of education that research is distinct from practice and has little direct application. Additionally, for participants in a study, sharing their stories may make them feel that their stories are important and that they are heard. When they tell a story, it helps them understand topics that they need to process (McEwan and Egan). Telling stories is a natural part of life, and all individuals have stories about their experiences to tell others. In this way, narrative research captures an everyday, normal form of data that is familiar to individuals. Narrative research is a form of qualitative research with strong ties to literature, and it provides a qualitative approach in which you can write in a persuasive, literary form. It focuses on the microanalytic picture—individual stories—rather than the broader picture of cultural norms, as in ethnography, or abstract theories (Creswell 502).

Narrative Research Techniques in ELT

Narrative researchers employ several data collection techniques including restorying, oral history, examination of photographs, memory boxes, and other artifacts, storytelling, letter writing, and autobiographical and biographical writing. An oral history may be obtained by the researcher during a structured interview schedule with predetermined questions (and hence with the researcher's agenda clearly stated) or through an open-ended approach in which the researcher asks participants to tell their own stories in their own ways (Gay, Mills and Airasian 360). Teachers can collect the materials apart from the obvious curriculum materials; they often include cards from former students, newspaper clippings, yearbooks, photographs, and audio- and videotapes of student performances (Gay, Mills and Airasian 360-361). Narrative

research engages participants in storytelling. Teachers, by nature, are master storytellers, and many will happily share stories about their experiences in school as “competent narrators of their lives. Letter writing (or email exchange) is another way to engage participants in writing about their lived experiences and to engage the narrative researcher and participant in a dialogue (Gay, Mills and Airasian 361). Autobiographical and biographical writing engage participant’s autobiographical or biographical writing. Similarly, a researcher can utilize many other narrative data sources that will contribute to the construction of the written narrative. For this purpose, documents such as lesson plans, parent newsletters, and personal philosophy statements can be exploited.

Issues in Narrative Research: The Challenge for Researchers

Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research. Coffey in *The Ethnographic Self* (1999) discusses that the issue of subjectivity has been raised in the educational research literature. It has been controversial in research community and has been attacked for its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of data. Narrative inquiry is not suitable when we have large number of participants to include. It is not suitable for investigators who seek an easy and unobstructed view of subjects’ lives. The researcher has to collect extensive information about the participant in order to fully understand the context of that individual. Therefore the analysis may be extremely slow and subjective. In addition, anonymity may become an issue as some participants do not want their anonymity protected as they want their stories to be shared.

Conclusions

Narrative inquiry entails understanding of participants’ experiences. “An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people’s lives, both individual and social” (Clandinin and Connelly 20). Narrative inquiry can be used as a methodology to describe the personal stories of teachers. Narratives as methods in ELT research are gaining momentum these days. With the help of narratives told by the participants, individual researcher can access rich layers of information that provide a more in-depth understanding of the participants’ points of view. In this research design researchers seek for ways to understand, and then present real-life experiences through the stories of the research participants. The narrative approach allows for a rich description of these experiences

and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences. Narrative inquiry amplifies voices that may have otherwise remained silent. The knowledge gained can offer the reader a deeper understanding of the subject material and extra insight to apply the stories to their own context. It is a methodology in which the researcher attempts to record the meanings of personal stories and events. This article has outlined some of the key characteristics, strengths, and limitations of narrative inquiry as a research method. It has also highlighted how it might contribute to the ELL context. English language teaching practitioners have acknowledged that narrative inquiry is a method in English education which helps to respond to the changing needs of ELT research, and a new form of knowledge production in the postmodern world.

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Living Arrangements of Elderly People at Old Age Homes in Pokhara, Nepal

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Abstract

Elderly people have been moving to old age homes because of detachment from their family members along with loneliness, widowhood, and aspirations of enhancement of spirituality. This has led to increasing trends of movement of elderly people towards old age home. There is a dearth of studies related to the lived experiences of elderly people with regard to living arrangement, especially in the context of Pokhara, Nepal. Therefore, this paper aims to explore perceptions of elderly people at old age home with regards to their living arrangement. This study was carried out for data collection using face to face in-depth interview with 22 people aged 60 years and above during the period May – July 2018. It follows thematic analysis, a meaning making approach, to analyse field data. Major findings of this study are better perceptions of elderly people with regard to living arrangement at old age homes in most of the cases in comparison to their place of origin. This study concludes that most of the elderly people have experienced peace, freedom and individualism at old age homes. It would be invaluable, especially for policy makers and stakeholders in order to attain the elderly people's quality of life.

Keywords: Living arrangement, Nepal, old age home, perceptions

Review of Literature

Systematic inquiry into changing population size, age structures and their policy implications on different aspects of development, such as, family structure, care of older persons, health services, housing and living arrangements, has been carried

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out, to some extent, in recent times. According to United Nations (1995), development is viewed in a broader context, that is, social, economic, cultural, and so forth. This was demonstrated by the International Conference on population and development of 1994, held in Cairo, which included many aspects such as socio-economic development, women's empowerment and reproductive health issues as well as population dynamics and age structure. Aspects covered in the literature on population and development include education, health, labour force, modernization and urbanization. These aspects influence the population in various ways. Improvements in health reduce mortality rates, leading to improved survival chances. Indeed, people can expect to live longer than any other previous generations and significantly longer than their parents and grandparents. Age structure is a crucial factor in the process of development. It is recognised that population and development affect each other. According to Pool (1996), in the process of development, demographic variables are critical components of social structures and change. The integration of population and development is inevitable from policy perspectives. The literature on population and development indicates that population factors should be integrated into development policies. Changing population size is an important aspect of development, and thus has significant policy implications. Discussing changes in population sizes and age structures, and their effects on development, Chesnais comments

Segmentation of the ages of life, by providing the numerical size of successive generations, indicates the potential development of certain socio-economic needs in future decades: today's babies will enter the school-age population in about 5 or 6 years, the working population in about 15 or 20 years, and the retired population in about 60 years' time (1992: 284).

Adhikary (2014) suggests that Nepal's demographic changes suggest a steep in the elderly population in the coming decades as a result of declining fertility and mortality, and an increasing life expectancy at birth. This phenomenon, coupled with rapid social changes resulting in the gradual breakdown of the traditional joint family system is likely to pose serious problems for the elderly people. Subedi (2003) concludes that family has been the key social institution that provided psychological, social and economic support to the individual at different stages of life. The elderly people were considered as knowledge banks and ideal persons for the younger. However, in the present context, the structure of family has undergone changes differently at different stages of social development in Nepal. Modernization and urbanization have brought changes to family structure in Nepal to a great extent. The extended family that existed in the society has changed to a nuclear family.

This has affected the position of the elderly in the family as well as the family's capacity to take care of the elderly people. According to Geriatric Centre Nepal (2010), the family's capacity to provide quality care to older people is decreasing with the reduction of the available kin support. In the given contexts, this paper aims to explore perceptions of elderly people with regards to their living arrangements after movement from their place of origin to old age home, considering Pokhara Metropolitan City as one of their destinations in Nepal.

Research Method

As per the nature of research objective, this study follows a qualitative research approach, attempting to explore perceptions of the elderly people at old age homes. Shryock, Siegel and et al. (1976) states that elderly people are demographically considered to be those people aged 60 years and above, especially for the developing countries. I interviewed 22 elderly people who were living at four old age homes in different locations of Pokhara Metropolitan City using semi-structured questionnaires. As stated by Sarantakos (2013), after undertaking interview with the interested participants through the old age homes, additional cases were chosen by means of snowball sampling in a qualitative research method. As illustrated by Gillham (2000), this study followed face to face interviews with participants, to establish themes and subthemes using the semi-structured questionnaires to understand elderly people's experiences. For this study, I visited the old age care home and asked the managers of old age care homes, who were running the care homes for their support in interviewing old people. Once I got verbal consent from the managers, I collected data from the elderly people who were really interested in participating in the interview for this research from May to December 2018. Likewise, I visited four old age homes, one after another, till saturation point was obtained. As given by Braun and Clarke (2006) with reference to thematic analysis and meaning making approach, themes were derived from field data relative to specific research objective.

Results

According to Aryal (2019), elderly people are eager to change their place of stay for various reasons like their poverty, loneliness, and need of spiritual enhancement. How elderly people perceive their old age home after leaving their place of origin is an important aspect of this study. There are supports, spiritual knowledge and practice, role of social worker, and perceptions of elderly people that determine their situation of living arrangements at elderly home.

Supports

There are different kinds of supports to transcendental family at old age home from their family, community and organizations. The transcendental family members are attached either with family relationship or blood relationship in one or other way. When family members come to visit their place of old age home, they come with some gifts for their relatives. In Nepali culture, there are norms and values that it would be great to visit somewhere else with some gifts. In this context, Chandra Maya, widow aged 76 years, shared her experiences in this way: “Occasionally my daughter and daughter-in law come here. My one daughter who lives in Kathmandu comes here. All my family members come to meet me time and again”. Likewise, Buddhisara, another woman, also shares her experiences in this way: “I have one cousin. He used to bring me necessary materials, food, fruits to take in. I don’t have any problem for that. All the families are engaged in different jobs, so my brother and sister-in-law come occasionally”. In this context, Chandra Maya, one of female participants shared her experiences in this way:

Everything that is needed to us like comb, clothes, food, and mosquito net and umbrella during rainy season along with shoes, medicines and other things are provided. There are a lot of associations, and agencies that have been providing us support for our well-being. They [Organisations] will provide us finance also. As a donation the people provide rupees 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and many more as per their wish. We are not trapped because of the money. If we also need medicine, they provide us. They will take us to hospital if we are sick. They will call the ambulance and take us for our treatment if we are having illness. (Chandra Maya, a widow, aged 76 years)

Spiritual Knowledge and Practice

Many people have similar characteristics in terms of their age, marital status, and social and economic status. Each religion is for peace, prosperity and happiness. In this course of life journey, at old age, elderly people feel easy to share their joys and sorrows with those transcendental family members having similar characteristics. Sometimes, spiritual teachers are invited to give a speech on religion, and they can learn spiritual teachings at old age home. This makes them happy and longing for God. In this context, one of the female participants finds old age home conducive to stay and share her experiences in this way:

There is peace and happiness in religion. There are a lot of friends like me. We share all the joys and sorrows. We are like one family [Transcendental]. For every work we can take their advice; they care and protect us. I am happy here. Some gurus are invited for religious speech. We all listen to them. I feel glad. (Buddhisara, an unmarried female aged 76 years)

Elderly people judge religious statements given in our religious books and share their heard and read stories with each other at old age home. The stories they share that have made their minds extended. In this regard, one of the male participants shared his stories:

A guru [spiritual teacher] gave a *mantra* to him as a *shishya* [disciple] and told him that he must not share it with anyone. He said that if you share it with anyone, you will go to hell, or else you will go to heaven. But he shared it with everyone. The guru then scolded him and asked why he did so. His reply was, now I will go to hell but all of these people will go to heaven. Because of this, even the guru has now become his *chela* (follower)... This even comes in *Srimad Bhagavata Purana* (Hindu religious text) where there are stories of great sacrifices. (Narayan, a married male, aged 65 years)

Elderly people have made their old age home as a spiritual home sharing one's knowledge with others. The practice of sharing knowledge has broadened their mind in terms of spiritual knowledge and practice among transcendental family members. It is believed that sharing knowledge is one of important things in our life. Another female participant shared her concept of religion in this way: "We need to read the religious book, share the learnt things with others. If we can share the religious things with others, God blesses us and that is the most important thing of our life." Likewise, Buddhisara shares her experiences in this way:

This religion has very broad aspect. Nothing in this world is greater than religion. God is everything. No one is powerful than God. God creates us, protects us and we should be thankful to Him for our birth. Our soul is greater than our body. One day our body will be mud but the soul never dies. I am praying not to take birth as a human in next birth. I wish no one in this world has to face any problem. Now I am waiting for my peaceful death. I don't need anything other than that. (Buddhisara, an unmarried female, aged 76 years)

Some of elderly people interviewed at old age home consider this place to have been an opportunity of serving people who visit them. This has contributed to the development of old age home at individual level. It is believed that it is way of going heaven if we can contribute whatever we can do to the individual and societal levels. Chandra Maya again shared her experience on old age home.

My job is to serve them [people working at building construction] with lunch and tiffin. When guests visit this place, I serve them hot and cold drinks. There are three-four members helping me. We do work in very friendly way with cooperation. There are all the required facilities. Future is uncertain, anything can happen but till now the situation is good. We all are happy. (Chandra Maya, a widow, aged 76 years)

Likewise, Radha shares her experiences of serving visitors in this way:

We should stay in this holy place for services not for the sake for anything. Life should be spent on services so that after our death we will get freedom in heaven. Here we can serve many people that act gives peace of heart and soul. At my home I was doing just my household activities but here I am serving people and am happier. All the members of my family were *Pranami* [A religious branch within Hindu religion]. My grandchildren at home are also following the same sect. Thus, I thought serving mankind is serving humanity. (Radha, a widow, aged 80 years)

Perception

Elderly females, especially widows with no child, find their stay conducive in joint family from both economic and social perspectives. When one's husband dies, there is more likely to be unfavorable situation in the family. One of the prime reasons behind this may be that most of the Nepalese females depend on husband's income though they are actively engaged in household chores. The household activities are unrecognized in terms of monetary value. As a result, they are seen as an income taker from the joint family but not as an income giver to the family. Abiding by orthodox Hindu norms, furthermore, females who cannot give birth to child in their lives are seen as a curse of previous life. Thus, they are not well treated in family and society. Even after death of husband, there would not be a responsible person to look after them in the family. After the death of their husband, they are bound to come to maternal home. They may take property with them to parental home if they have received any from husband's family. Even in the parental home, married daughters would not be well treated by family members. At the same time, property

of the married daughters is of great importance. Whether they are treated well or not depends upon the amount of their property. In this context, one of the widow participants, who did not give birth to any child, was not treated well at parental home even after movement from her own family after her husband's death. She shares her perceptions with regards to previous stay, parental home, and present stay at old age home:

I was comfortable at my own home while I was with my husband. I could spend my property in my own way to sustain the life. They [Relatives] have no concern with me. I have only love for them but they love my property only and take it away. They ignore me. I have gone maternal home twice after I came here due to my own work there. Otherwise, they would not call me... Many things came in my mind. I feel very sad after remembering the situation. After the death of my husband, the family members of my brother took me to the parental home. I had some piece of land as my property. They took all my property and then mistreated me. (Goma, a widow, aged 70 years)

She further shares her perceptions with regards to old age home:

I feel very comfortable here. We all are old here. When everyone falls sick in a moment, there is the problem for care, otherwise, I normally feel peace here. We all share the joys and sorrows and live happily. Some difficulties to be noticed are that there are only a few people here and all are old. (Goma, a widow, aged 70 years)

In Nepali culture, females perceive their happiness if they do not need to work during their old age. They think of dreams of old ages even from their younger age. They do not have any tussle at old age home as in the family at home. As mentioned above, they are given supports for meals and clothing. They do not need to struggle for those things. That's why they feel comfortable at old age home. One of the widow participants found old age home easier in comparison to parental family:

I feel easier that I do not need to work here hard. I have not faced any difficulties for meals and clothing. I just cook, eat and stay. Things are fine with me now. What would be in the future I do not know. (Hari Maya, a widow, aged 85 years)

Elderly people who have left their home for enhancing spirituality study. They find old age home much better with conducive environment in comparison to stay with family members at home. Among others, one of the reasons behind this is there

are a lot of distractions due to phone and visitors at home. Furthermore, materialistic attachment is high in terms of clothes and foods in the family whereas people can make concentration on sole goal of attaining spirituality at old age home. It is also that *yogis* (saints) are well known about herbal medicine to use if someone gets sick. In this regard, Narayan, who has taken sole goal of enhancing spirituality (Hinduism) shares his perception at old age home compared with family at home:

At home there are lots of distractions such as your phone, visitors. Here you are able to work with ease at your own pace. I was doing my learning at home as well but I was not very satisfied there, but I am satisfied here... It is very different like two ends of the spectrum. When you stay at home, you are focused on eating good food, talking about what is inside the family, there is materialistic attachment. There is attachment in terms of both clothes and food. For example, here we are grazing cows. To be able to drink their milk is very advantageous. You can't find it outside the old age home even if you are willing to pay higher amount of money. But here, we have that opportunity. All these [showing by pointing finger] are local cows; they are not selectively bred. Next thing, *guru* [spiritual teacher] here makes *ghee* as well. It turns out that cows' milk is like pious. I have been cured because of cow's ghee and *ayurveda* [herbal medicine]. All of these will not be available at home. (Narayan, a married man, aged 65 years)

Discussion

Reviewing increment of elderly people and the cultural transformation of Nepal, there has been a rapid increase in the elderly people on the one hand and declining norms and values of giving time to elderly people at their home (place of origin) with increasing urbanization and modernization on the other. There has been a rapid increase in numbers of elderly people aged 60 years and above in Nepal with a population growth rate nearly 4 percent during the period 2001-2011, more than a twice in comparison to national population growth rate of 1.35 percent per annum. In the given context, it is likely that support will need to increase for the basic needs of elderly people because of the rapid increase in their numbers in the country. Both male and female adults have been leaving their family, especially their aging parents for foreign employment and abroad education. Furthermore, there have been declining traditional norms and values in terms of respect, love, and attachment towards elderly people by their younger generations, sons and daughters, and their offspring.

According to (ancient) Hindu philosophy, elderly people should leave their home to enhance their spirituality at old age after having completed all responsibilities like gaining education, bearing and rearing children up to middle age. It is believed that people aged up to 25 years have to gain their education and thereafter they have to engage in married life along with bearing and rearing children. When their children are grown up, they may have free time, visiting temples and praying to God for making next life better. In Nepalese context, in the past, most of elderly people were fully engaged in caring their grand children at home whereas their sons and daughters-in-law were engaged in earning activities outside their home. Nowadays, elderly people are breaking these traditional norms and values and escaping from their old age responsibilities of rearing and caring their younger generation. Results of this study clearly exemplify that there are rare cases of elderly people leaving their home because of family disputes. Therefore, this study suggests that individualism has developed not only within younger generations but also within elderly people.

For centuries, many people and their generations in Nepal have been residing in old-style houses made of hay and thatch. Due to poverty, they could not pay attention towards living arrangement at new style of modern houses. They can only pay attention to providing the morning and evening meals. Therefore, they have a high aspiration of living in new style of modern houses in their life as everyone has expectation but poverty is a problem. As said in Nepali proverb – “*Janha kangal tyaha chandal*” meaning that where there is poverty there is quarrel. When people are very poor, they cannot fulfill their duties of looking after their elderly family members by providing food, shelter, and necessary medicines when they are ill. Consequently, there are family disputes between younger and older people. Then, elderly people attempt to find new place of living, far from their family members.

In contrast to poor family, there is affluent class of people, especially those living in urban and semi-urban of Nepal. Younger family members want to make their old age people happy and healthy and want to fulfil their desires. In such cases, old people are given options whether they stay at home or at old age home for conducive environment of spiritual enhancement. In the course of making ease for elderly people, sons and daughters have contributed financially and emotionally to construct rooms at elderly home. Thus, elderly people have made their stay at elderly homes, especially for spiritual enhancement.

Even after moving to elderly homes, there are clash between old rich people and old poor people. In Nepalese culture, identity is supposed to be high or low based on their economic status. People having high economic status who are financially

supported by their family members from their home, feel themselves of being high identity whereas old poor people who are not supported by anyone from outside the elderly homes, often feel their identity low so some old rich people treat them down. Therefore, there is clash between rich and poor people living at elderly homes though they live at the same place. In this context, one of the participants shares his experiences at elderly home: “*Bridhhashramma Srimati Laijane Jar Pani Aoonunaparos!*”. It means no one would come to old age home, even the person who accompanies his wife. They feel bad when rich elderly people are offered foods like fruits, vegetables and other good food items but they (old poor people) do not get these things being distributed equally at old age home.

Most of elderly people have enjoyed with well-equipped modern facilities of their residence at elderly homes. Elderly homes have been built with modern style by using cement, rod, bricks, and sands. Furthermore, modern amenities like electricity, piped drinking water, and garden with different kinds of flowers are available around the elderly homes. In Nepal, people are moving towards modern styles of buildings replacing hut with hay and thatch. People enjoy residing in modern style of house with modern facilities. Such buildings have been well equipped with modern facilities that have made elderly people's life better from the perspective of modern styles of housing at the place of elderly homes.

Some of the elderly people, especially from poor economic background and being alone, feel discriminated in the elderly homes because they are known as only receiver from other people but not giver to anyone. They are not treated well in the elderly homes. One of the participants shared his bitter experiences of elderly home like this way:

People who are from high economic and social background do not treat other people well. What I suggest other poor people including even for my enemy is not to stay at elderly homes as they are treated very badly. If something is given to elderly people living at old age homes, those goods are not distributed equally to poor people. (Bhuwan, a widower, aged 75 years)

As discussed in the literature review, elderly people have free time to enhance their spiritual knowledge and experiences after bearing and rearing their children and grandchildren at their home. In Nepal, people, especially elderly Hindu people are involved in different religious communities like *Krishna Pranami* (a Hindu religious community). According to this religious philosophy, they do not eat anything touched by people from other religious communities. There is no such conducive

environment in their family member as young generation want to eat meat for their physical energy that is not bearable for the elderly people. It is believed that people enhance their spiritual path ahead effectively if they can follow norms and values of the religion. According to this religious community, people should eat vegetarian food only. Therefore, old age home is conducive environment for spiritual people. For this, family and community people have helped elderly people supporting them whatever they need. This is solely for spiritual enhancement at old age. Elderly people have shared their experiences that old age home is much better for spiritual enhancement along with their stay, religious study and practices as they do not need to entertain visitors and community people like at their family home. In this context, individualism is more common among rich elderly people. Chandra Maya, shared her experiences on individualism as follows:

I have daughter-in-law and grandchild in the village. I have handed-over the responsibility of land and agricultural production to my daughter-in-law. I had told them to take care of the assets of village and then made my destiny to the old age home. Now I feel like I don't need anything else. I am happy with what I have. I have been living here for 7 years... I cared them [Children]; made them able to stand on their own feet. At home, there are a lot of agriculture, livestock and other works. I did all these works actively when I was young. Now grandchildren are grown up, they are studying. I am also getting older. My cousin told me to go to temple, so I also like to come here. Now it is my time to remember God, live peacefully, sing the *Bhajan* (hymns) and live happily. (Chandra Maya, a widow, aged 76 years)

In this study, there are a few numbers of widows whose residence has been changed from one place to another due to loneliness, helplessness and economic hardship. The reason behind this was that they became widows at very early ages. In the past, there was no tradition of widow remarriage. In this study, some widows wondered that their stay would not be changed like this way from husband's home to parental home and from parental home to old age home if they could get married second time. It was custom that the married daughter should not get married once again even if husband died at very early age of life. They regret now that they attempted to maintain parents' prestige without thinking of second marriage. Thus, they suffered a lot in the course of spending their life with economic hardship and

the then socio-cultural practices against widows. Therefore, this study advocates for further marriage if earlier marriage does not work well for women and if they do not have any child..

Conclusion

In this study, poverty, mistreatment and residential change have been moving ahead one after another in the lives of widows, widower, and unmarried single person. After all, they have moved to old age home for their livelihood. Even at old age home, some of them feel ostracization and mistreatment from their affluent colleagues due to poverty. In contrast to poor elderly people, there are a few numbers of affluent elderly people who have moved to old age home with a view to enhancing their spirituality studies, seeking freedom, and individual development. They do not feel any sort of mistreatment either at family home or at old age home. They also find dual financial and logistic supports from both their family and old age home. Thus, perceptions of living arrangement differ depending upon the socio-economic status of elderly people.

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Rural Farmers in a Changing Climate: Performative Integrated Adaptation Practices in Outer Terai of Nepal

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Abstract

This paper assesses how rural farmers in the Terai region of Nepal have experienced climate change and what strategies are adapted to mitigate the effects of climate change on agriculture and livelihoods. The farmers experienced climate change effects in the form of warming temperatures, loss of agro-biodiversity, decline in agricultural yields and upsurge in diseases that exerted negativities on agriculture and livelihoods. Endorsing collective experience and cultural frameworks, farmers have developed integrated adaptation strategies, updated indigenous practices, and diversified agricultural practices by conversion of farming period, application of alternative crops, hybrid farming, dairy cooperatives and micro-credit. The performative integrative adaptive practices entrenched in environmental anthropology envisioned on indigenous environmental knowledge, assessments, and cultural responses mediated the interactions with nature and shape the ways in which farmers observe, understand, experience and respond to climate change. It is imperative to recognize a locally applicable, temporally and spatially adaptive, culturally adaptive experiential model that is shaped into integrated implementation practices in climate change policies to develop cost-effective, participatory, sustainable and effective adaptation strategies in agriculture and livelihood.

Keywords: Ethnographic, self-help groups, folk epistemology of climate, rain forecasters

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Background

As a deviation from normal climate condition, climate change is believed to be directly or indirectly caused by human actions that change the composition of the global atmosphere and add to natural variability. Human-caused global climate change or anthropogenic climate change, in contrast to natural climate change, represents not only changes in temperature but also in precipitation, humidity, haze and wind. According to NAPA (2010), geophysical and socioeconomic conditions, fragile ecosystems and global warming have left Nepal under constant threat of destruction related to the diversity of biodiversity, ecology and infrastructure. The warming is continuous and the maximum temperature rise is at an annual rate of 0.04-0.06°C. Kates (2000) argues that due to limited capacity to cope with climate change-related hazards, Nepal remains more sensitive to climate change impacts. Aase et al. (2009) assert that climate change generates a great impact on rainwater dependent subsistence farmers. It affects agriculture with a direct impact on food production and livelihoods due to natural climate cycles and human activities.

The fertile plains of the Ganges make Terai (23% of Nepal's total fertile land area) a place of agricultural surplus to supply the less productive hills/mountains of Nepal. "Climate Change Impact, Adaptation and Vulnerabilities" (IPCC) Report 2007 has noted that in recent decades, Terai has experienced the worst climate change with severe droughts, severe and recurrent floods and landslides. Manandhar et al. (2011) demonstrate that due to dependence on natural resources and subsistence agriculture, the impact of climate change on the people of Terai is severe. Rural farmers in eastern Terai have observed a more intense and frequent flood, severe cold spells and the extinction of agro-biodiversity and the advent of vector-borne diseases. Aase et al. (2009) stated that the lack of rain in 2009 reduced crop yields by up to 30-50 in Terai that has threatened the food production.

Food production is central to human life hence anthropology has an interest in agriculture and climatic effects on agricultural practices and farmers' livelihood that relates environmentally, socially, politically and culturally. The prime reason accountable for anthropological interests in climate change research is the irrevocable transformations that climate change is bringing to people and places traditionally studied by anthropologists (Boko et al. 2007). Climate change researchers brought notice to anthropology's unique offerings – the agency of ethnographic and participatory methods to decipher the cognitive and cultural landscape in which farmers' understanding of climate and climate information is grounded and the

decision-making processes and environment which shape farmers' adaptation strategies (Roncoli 2006). One major contribution of anthropologists to climate change research includes the documentation of how place-based peoples observe, perceive, and respond to the local effects of global climate change (Krupnik & Jolly 2002). Despite the increase in anthropological literature (Strauss & Orlove 2003), the specific methods and praxis on climate change studies remain indistinct. Considering both the exceptional exigency and the new level of reflexivity that climate change ushers in, now anthropologists are seeking to adopt cross-scale, multi-stakeholder, and interdisciplinary approaches in research and practice revealing problems relating the specifics and multilayered complexities of local human experience to the generalities and abstractions of measurement in the global.

From a climate science perspective, localizing is the process of downscaling global climate models to specific locations, taking into account local perceptions of risk, experience, and vulnerability, adaptability and inability of top-down approaches to address the concerns of local farmers' livelihood security. However, in the absence of state-sponsored locally suitable adaptation plan, Terai farmers are coping autonomously to the changing climate with their available resources and sociocultural knowledge. Backwardness, resource mismanagement and high reliance on subsistence agriculture have limited the ability of Terai farmers to adapt to climate change. Barlett et al. (2010) argue that policymakers and resource managers should draft and implement adaptation plans, and for making the plan effective, it is crucial to gain a comprehensive understanding of the local institutions involved in adaptation process.

More important for sustainable adaptation to climate change is to empower the local people, organize and prioritize local efforts using local resources, arranging adaptation by themselves for the vulnerabilities. However, identifying and addressing risks, experiences, and adaptation strategies to climate change at local level in rural agriculture, biodiversity and livelihoods has not yet been fully documented sufficiently and also not well cherished and promoted by governmental and non-governmental agencies in Nepal. Given this, the objective of this paper is to assess how rural farmers in Terai have experienced climate change, the sensitivities encountered, and strategies adapted at the indigenous level to respond to climate change to reduce the impact of climate change on agriculture and livelihoods.

Data and Methods

Methodologically, the study takes a qualitative approach. Fieldwork took place in Jamuni village a part of *Badhaiyatal Gaupalika* (Rural municipality) in Bardiya district on the outskirts of Terai in province 5 in west-central Nepal. Inspired by the philosophical principles of hermeneutic tradition of analysis of works and objects as part of cultural values of contemporary society, the study uses qualitative descriptive study design in which rain water dependent farmers were selected for the study. At the first step, a list of households was made to identify eligible respondents (Household heads over 65 years old) among households that mainly depend on rainwater-based agriculture, and 620 household heads (386 men and 234 women) were considered eligible. Of these, according to purposive random sample, 145 heads of households (82 men and 63 women), one each of the 145 households, were selected for the study on the ground that as elderly farmers they are the main decision makers in the family and has a good experience of climate change and its impact. Their ethnic composition is assorted with migrant hill origin *Pahadiya* farmers' predominant population of 71%, followed by Terai ancestry *Madhesi* and indigenous *Tharu* population 29%. Only 34% household heads are simply literate and are able to read but unable to write properly.

Open-ended survey questions were used for collecting information from 145 household heads on the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, agricultural production, livelihoods and adaptation strategies and supplementing ethnic information. Additional qualitative data was collected through interviews, observations and case studies of these 145 household heads personal experiences, assessments, and responses to climate change. The field study was carried out during an arduous field study period from October 16 to November 5, 2019.

Agriculture, Livelihood and Climate Change Nexus

Bardiya district was part of Nepal before it was ceded to the British East India Company by the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816. In the mid-19th century, Bardiya was handed back to Nepal (Paudyal 2013). Before 1950, Bardiya was covered by a dense forest with a sparse indigenous population of Tharu. The district is mostly sub-tropical with summer temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius. Due to climate change, the average maximum annual temperature has changed in the district with an increasing trend, causing additional difficulties in livelihoods (AEPC 2014).

The study area Jamuni village is a backward rural settlement of Bardiya district. The total population of this village is 11,539 (Male 5,073 / Female 6,466) in 2,601

households. The median household size is 4.44 and the literary rate of the village is 61.4%. Farming is the main occupation of 1925 (74%) households in Jamuni (DDP, 2017). The average educational attainment is 9th grade and has a multi-ethnic composition including migrant hill ancestry *Pahadiya* (Chhetri 24%, Brahmin 18%, Ethnic or Janajati 14%, Low caste hill Dalit 15%), *Madhesi* Yadav 19%, and indigenous *Tharu* 10%. *Pahadiya* Brahmin-Chhetri, Dalit and Janajati owned land on average 1 *Bigha* (equivalent to 6772.63 m²) per household and *Madhesi* and *Tharu* 0.4 *Bigha*. Flood victim people of hill ancestry from different parts of Nepal were resettled here as a part of the Resettlement Project in 1970-71.

Reimbursement of the hill people, deforestation, construction of houses and population growth have led to a serious ecological imbalance in Jamuni rural settlement. The effects of climate change have been felt by a decrease in rainfall, the extinction of various plant and animal species, and a change in the nature of weather, humidity and temperature. The circumstantial pressures of climate change have affected conventional lifestyles; self-sufficiency efforts were more difficult, perceived and experienced in everyday life. Infrequent and erratic drops in rainfall, rising temperatures leading to droughts in the summer, and oddly low temperatures and cold spells in winter have affected agriculture and biodiversity. Farmers are constantly being hurt by water scarcity. Water resources are depleted with decreasing groundwater and river levels, and wetlands are becoming arid. The natural ecosystem and biodiversity have been affected severely affecting many local flora and fauna such as jute, cotton, sugarcane, bees and cranes, etc.

The frequency of summer storms has increased, causing damage to shelters and crops. Conventional rice and wheat have been replaced by new hybrid species. The significant reduction in the output of jute and sugarcane has caused economic losses and changed the agricultural model. Cotton was the main crop in the 1970s, but now the cultivation has been abandoned due to deteriorating soil quality. The yield of many crops tends to decrease continuously. Over the past 40 years, though the production of cabbage, maize and lentils has decreased; rice production has increased; thanks to the use of advanced fertilizers. Climate change triggered altering seasonal rainfall caused variation in agricultural production with complications in plantation and harvesting, threatening food security and livelihood requiring them to work harder to fulfill dietary needs.

Almost all 145 household head farmers claim that rising temperature is a result of deforestation and fading rainfall. The reduced rainfall has shortened the maturity

span of crops and the ripening of seeds. The emergence of new pests on crops and the decline of harvests often force farmers to make excessive use of fertilizers, chemicals, pesticides and insecticides. The taste of many varieties of crops has totally vanished. Recurrent drought has adversely affected the growth of delicious grass species. The slower regeneration of forage species and the scarcity of pastures have forced farmers to change their traditional farming methods. Traditional animal husbandry as a means of subsistence has decreased significantly. The appearance of dense fog in the region also forced farmers to give up grazing. Extremely cold winters and hot summers have threatened milk and meat production. The income from traditional livestock is decreasing. Not only is there a scarcity of pasture, but over the past 20 years, farmers have agonized from many new viruses and mass deaths of livestock due to rising temperatures. But, they did not get any support from government agricultural support center.

Cook (2012) confirmed that while climate change is not solely destructive, the negative impacts of global warming on agriculture and human health are even greater. The increase in temperature and the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on crops have had serious consequences on human health in Jamuni. Tropical diseases and viruses are common in all seasons. Farmers noticed an increase in flies, mosquitoes, aphids, termites and experienced many health problems in the elderly and infants e.g. gastroenteritis, increased parasitic diseases caused by vectors transmission, malaria, Japanese encephalitis, viral flu, allergies, rashes and menstrual disorders. Foodborne illnesses had increased due to rising temperatures. Escalation of waterborne diseases and demand for additional water supplies has augmented the risk of using contaminated drinking water. A 70 years old respondent woman shares her experience:

There were no serious problems of infectious diseases in the past, but now the increase in temperature has led to the emergence of infectious diseases in humans and livestock. It was not required to use a mosquito net, but now I use it even in the daytime. Medical costs are rising—a result of changing Mausam (climate).

Change in Agriculture and Livelihood in Response to Changing Climate

Indigenous communities in rural Nepal have used indigenous knowledge and practices to adapt to climatic and non-climatic changes (Helvetas 2011). Pelling (2011) argues that local communities around the world have shown adaptations of crop production

to mixed crop systems, farmers use breeding livestock for greater tolerance and productivity, use their indigenous knowledge for climate variability and mode of production. Ajani et al. (2013) describe indigenous adaptation strategies practiced in sub-Saharan Africa and the benefits of integrating indigenous knowledge into formal climate change adaptation strategies. By exploring challenges and opportunities to integrate, combine and supplement indigenous practice with modern scientific knowledge and technology, Karki and Adhikari (2015) argue that the integration of indigenous knowledge with modern knowledge for sustainable ecosystem conservation and management has been largely successful in Nepal.

With an integrated approach (indigenous and updated), Jamuni farmers followed two steps, first realizing the impact of climate change, then deciding to adopt a specific measure. The premises on which they make basic adaptive decisions are diverse and arise from direct stimuli from the environment, sociocultural position, and ideological sociocultural norms. Using their knowledge, they made assessment of what they knew about the overall meaning and perception of climate change and individual and collective responses. They experimented, used indigenous knowledge, methods and experiences, improved on conventional techniques and applied integrated approaches to deal with the threat of climate change. They have developed the ability to adapt themselves to changes using limited technical and monetary methods. Though rural crofters with little knowledge of climate change adaptation techniques, they are aware and feel the impacts on agriculture and livelihoods and are striving to adapt. A 72 years old Madhesi respondent narrated his story:

We use indigenous knowledge in two dimensions: Indigenous knowledge content, response strategies, tools/techniques; and the processes by which that knowledge is communicated and put into action, including social learning, knowledge sharing, and up-to-date feedback. The connection between indigenous scientific practice and reality (how we observe, interpret and construct knowledge from our interactions with the environment) and our culture in which we anchored, is inseparable. Adivasi (indigenous) and updated practices are our integrated strategy.

For the farmers, survival is a concern, adaptation is an interaction with nature regenerated through preferred practices that are socially construed and culturally/pragmatically meaningful and built through coercive coping practices to support agricultural and livestock production for greater productivity. Their knowledge and skills of environment and its relationship to social systems are key elements in updated and revised adaptive culture, capacity and identity to deal with the effects of climate

change. Understanding the interaction of culture and climate, as well as the meticulous role of perceptions, knowledge and values as elements of the interaction, has led farmers to focus on adaptive responses. The technologies, environmental knowledge and climate adaptation adopted by Jamuni farmers are based on what Richards (1993) calls ‘performative implementation knowledge’, a skill inherent in ancestral experience, a competence rooted in farmers time-honored and place-based experience embedded with modernity rather than predefined in abstract principles.

Farmers’ responses to climate change include an iterative succession of improvised strategy adjustments. Based on expectations of what the climate might be like, farmers take farming measures. In moderation, they acquire their behavior by scanning the environment in the weeks and months before the onset of rain, and continue to do so until they could plant trees, a process that depends on the combination of sensory understanding, accumulated experience, study skills and information communication. During normal rainy times, it is easy for farmers to keep track of their farming schedule by following their traditional agricultural schedule. However, during the delayed monsoon season, they modify the normal farming schedule and follow a new cultivation sequence by experimenting with modified planting and harvesting times, short-term hybrids innovation, diversify agriculture, drought and temperature tolerant crops, make efficient use of available water resources and grow a wide range of crops, thus reducing the risk of total crop failure.

Seed banks, savings and seed sharing among self-help groups are widespread. Along with the use of organic (dung) fertilizers, the use of complete NPK fertilizers (nitrogen and potassium) has increased. These adjustments aim to increase yields addressing existing climate conditions by drawing on farmers’ agricultural knowledge and experience. They are also experimenting with social and agroforestry activities such as planting hybrid forage species and grass species. As part of the adaptation strategy, farmers have turned to improved hybrid livestock breeds. With a small number of crossbred cattle, no additional pasture is needed. Pet insurance is getting popularity. After the establishment of dairy cooperatives, selling milk has become a new business. These diverse adaptive practices are made on the basis of local cultural experience and skills.

By recognizing and acknowledging the power of the trajectory of change, farmers see alternative solutions that help them in their quest to understand how the world works. Savings and microcredit initiatives based on local experience have been

replicated and are aimed at protecting farmers from high interest rates of landlords. Farmers have invested credits in small businesses, raise goats and poultry, and manage agricultural inputs (seeds, tools, fertilizers, pesticides), etc. Modern beekeeping has become popular. These initiatives have helped reduce the risk of crop failure and shocks from extreme weather. With the decline of forest resources, farmers value locally processed briquettes (rice husk/dry manure mix) for fuel. Alternative technologies of Biogas, solar home systems and innovative stoves have been used to cope with the thinning of forests. Farmers are using local organics viz. mustard oil, organic *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) extract and a variety of local plants to control mosquitoes. All in all, climate change is an increasingly important issue in strengthening and changing the position of farmers, helping them better understand and adapt to climate change to manage it effectively for the betterment of self and society.

Indigenous Cultural Adaptation, Collectivism and Social Solidarity

There is fundamental tension in forecast dissemination between scientific forecasts and local climate prediction practices (Ajibade and Shokemi 2003; Pennesi 2007). While most anthropologists focus on the differences between traditional environmental knowledge and scientific knowledge, some research shows important points of congruence (Orlove, et al. 2002). Nabhan (2002) describes how indigenous inhabitants of the arid American Southwest and of northwestern Mexico note with delight that after rare rainstorms, the desert smells like rain. Body's senses and mental models are chief avenues through which farmers get to know their local weather in its particular manifestations e.g. rain, hail, snow, wind, and temperature. Orlove et al. (2010) exemplify that Ugandan farmers might see clouds in the sky and, based on their color and shape, know whether it will rain; they may feel the wind and, based on its direction or strength, recognize whether it will bring rain or chase it away; they may hear thunder and see lightning flashes on the horizon and, based on their orientation, predict whether the storm will head their way; they may feel heat at night, and, based on its intensity and the time of year, discern whether planting time is approaching.

Tschakert (2007) exemplify that in many parts of the world, trees, wind, and birds are the subjects of attentive scrutiny by local farmers who rely on them to predict seasonal rainfall. As indigenous culture of prediction ingrained in environmental anthropology, farmers in Jamuni were using the indigenous environmental knowledge

on rain forecasting. Amid unusual rainfall pattern, the farmers comprehend the rainfall pattern by using their visual and sensory perceptions, mental models, indigenous environmental knowledge and experiences concurring to Strauss and Orlove's (2003) argument that visual and sensory perceptions are key elements of the folk epistemology of climate. In indigenous Tharu community of Jamuni, based on collective experience and cultural framing based on folk narratives of climate change (passed on between generations), the indigenous knowledge of rain forecasting is proving effective in comprehending the rainfall pattern.

Elderly Tharu farmers predict rainfall when the house sparrows play in the dust on the ground and when black ants come out from the cleft carrying their eggs and seeking elevated place. Likewise, when numerous fire-flies revolve around trees at night, Tharu farmers predict the possibility of rain. Farmers believe that when the eastern wind stops blowing in the month of August and western wind start to gust, this wind will bring rain. Ribbit of frogs signify that there will be a heavy rainfall. If there is eastern wind in the month of November-December, clouds may form but with no rain. Rain may occur when the evening sky appears red in the east. It is a belief that a distance smoky halo around the sun will bring early rain and vice-versa. Cattle will be contented and lope when it is about to rain. Formation of elephant trunk shape cloud below the rainbow is an indication of heavy rain in near future. The predictions of these rain forecasters urge the farmers for agricultural preparation which is an indigenous adaptation strategy against the changing climate. Pahadiya and Madhesi farmers have also emulated this culture of rain prediction. An old Tharu respondent of 85 years revealed a strange ritual performed during a summer drought.

Our women perform a bizarre ritual of plowing up their yards in the middle of the night stark naked singing songs to appease the rain god. No male is allowed to watch the dance and if anyone is caught they will be punished for offering food to Devta (god). This ceremony ties our people together and reaffirms our belief in female primacy, collectivism; promoting social solidarity that help us cope with drought. For me, climate change is nature's worst but best for our unity.

A conventional but interesting approach to preserving soil fertility is favored by Pahadiya and Madhesi farmers in Jamuni. It is believed that if Bhumi Devi (the earth goddess) is appeased through consultations and puja rituals, the mother earth (symbolizing female fertility) will produce bountiful crops. Based on indigenous epistemology, seeing and knowing local youth have learned and appreciated different

practices by passionately observing and practicing elders. Elderly people are invested in reliable knowledge because they have socio-cultural experiences, have seen things and suffered, including climate events, changes and impacts. Local traditions and practices have generated a system of meanings and relationships based on exotic experiences, cultural and ritual patterns that reconcile people's participation in natural phenomena and processes, structure the way they observe, understand, experience and react and the factors of the world they live in. Through indigenous knowledge systems integrated with up-to-date integrated versions, farmers have developed and implemented extensive adaptation strategies that help them reduce their vulnerability to climate change. However, this knowledge is rarely taken into account by policymakers when designing and implementing modern mitigation and adaptation strategies on climate change impacts on agriculture and livelihood.

Conclusion

Unjustified depletion of natural resources, subsistence agricultural production, deforestation and extension of new settlement made Jamuni farmers more vulnerable to aberrant problem of climate change impacts that impinged on their interactions with environment not only through its impact on biodiversity, agricultural practices and livelihood wellbeing, but also as a dimension of collective narratives and the uncertainties for future. The locally fashioned “performative integrated adaptation practices” ingrained in environmental anthropology of the broad interrelationship between culture and ecology mediated the engagements with natural phenomena and processes and framed the way farmers observed, understood, experienced, and adapted to climatic variations with a set of responses in crop selection, livestock management and livelihood. Farmers as innovators, creative sociocultural technical actors responded in changed environmental circumstances; adjusted their adaptation behaviour that depicts how adaptive agricultural performance is entrenched in sociocultural, technical and ecological contexts. Adaptation is noticeably a sociocultural-technical and a ‘go-ahead process’ that is socially-culturally ingrained, and adaptation as a set of modeled responses to the conditions, and adaptive processes as sociocultural phenomena going up beyond changing climate conditions and agriculture as performance for survival simply more than the hackneyed farmers approach.

Climate change is the nastiest of the nature but preeminent for solidarity bringing farmers together, reaffirming collectivism, promoting solidarity to cope climate change effects reconciling natural phenomena; processes structuring ways in observing,

understanding, experiencing and responding. But with financial constraints, low education and poor knowledge on modern adaptation techniques of climate change, adaptation mechanisms are insufficient, compelling many farmers to shift from agriculture to foreign job, business etc. Consequently, the unused barren agricultural land is increasing which is creating threat of food security. As effective adaptation not only needs to be technically effective in reference to climate and ecology, but needs to be effective in reference to the social-cultural needs of the individuals and collectivities that perform them, at the policy level, it is requisite recognizing time and space bound locally suitable adaptation experience model shaped into integrated knowledge based performative practices in climate change policies to develop cost-effective, participatory, sustainable and effective adaptation strategies on agriculture and livelihood. There are challenges related to human dimensions of climate change as well as the ideological and sociocultural nature of climate science.

Notes:

1. The term *Dalit* is used for so-called low-caste Indo-Nepalese people in Hindu caste hierarchy, whereas the term *Janajati* is used for ethnic groups of Tibeto-Nepalese Mongolian origin.
2. *Pahadiya* is a term used for hill ancestry people of Nepal.
3. *Chhetri* and *Brahmin* are the so-called high caste Hindus of Indo-Nepalese ancestry.
4. The term *Madhesi* is used for the people of Indian ancestry residing in Nepal Terai. *Yadav* is a *Madhesi* Hindu caste group of Terai whereas *Tharu* people are an ethnic group indigenous to the Terai.

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R. K. Narayan's *The Guide*: A Modern Version of a Panchatantra Tale

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Abstract

This paper aims to deal with R. K. Narayan's novel, *The Guide*, as a modern version of a Panchatantra tale of a thief transformed into a saint. A unity of vision and tranquillity of temperament commingle in the novel. The language, in which the narration is couched, is generally luminous and lucid, metaphorically temperate and simple in syntax. The smooth conveyance of the novel's easy action to the readers imparts a sharp-eyed and taught feeling of gentleness in the portrayal of Narayan's character. Though this feeling verges on contemplative gentleness, Narayan's attitude is not that simple and encompasses expertness in defining the linked and confused territories of sincerity and self-deception. The complex association of sincerity and self-deception is indeed the organizing theme of the novel.

The story of the novel is closely interlinked with the experience R. K. Narayan was exposed to in his childhood which moulded his thinking of writing this novel. He owed conceptualizing the character of Raju, the hero of the novel, to his impression of the 'Super Guide' who guided him and his friends around the National Broadcasting Corporation Studios at the Rockefeller Center.

The idea of the story stemmed from his experience of a ritual fasting which led to the germination of the motif of 'enforced sainthood' in his mind before he visited the United States in 1957 in a new novel underpinning suffering due to enforcing of sainthood. The experience he gained of the ritual fasting provided him with the outline of the plot appurtenant to the subject he found himself contemplating. The paper details how the idea has materialized into the full-fledged novel.

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Keywords: Conceptualizing, confused territories, self-deception, temperament, tranquillity

Introduction

In speaking of R. K. Narayan's masterpiece, *The Guide*, published in 1958, as an exceptional specimen of the genre quite difficult to handle, the genre being the serious comedy. William Walsh says succinctly,

Success in it calls for a sensibility preserved from ambivalence or fracture, an unusual unity in the point of view as well as a social tradition in which the comic and the sad are not sharply marked off one from the other. It requires too a certain equanimity, an evenness of temperament and manner, to hold back the exaggeration of farce and the one-sidedness of sentimentality. (114)

In *The Guide*, the unity of vision and tranquillity of temperament commingle with its tone "pitched at that middle level on which we live the staple of our lives" (Walsh 114). The story of the novel has not been imagined out of nothingness. The Super Guide's speech, smooth as it was, was so vibrant and striking that it outshone and recreated "history and archaeology out of thin air." (Narayan 1988: 32)

The idea of the story allied to the Panchatantra tale of a thief transformed into a saint by the devotion of the inmates of the house he had entered to steal, disguised as a saint, have been solidified by his experience of a ritual fasting into the germination of the motif of 'enforced sainthood' entailed by the Panchatantra tale in his mind before he visited the United States in 1957 in a new novel underpinning suffering due to enforcing of sainthood. The experience he had gained of the ritual fasting provided him with the outline of the plot appurtenant to the subject he found himself contemplating along the line of the Panchatantra tale, so to say. R. K. Narayan was well-read in the Panchatantra tales.

In the extreme desperation that resulted from a severe drought which had dried up all the rivers and tanks in the novelist's home town of Mysore, and even the Krishnaraja Sagar, a huge reservoir which helped with its water in the irrigation of several thousands of acres, the municipal council decided to have recourse to rituals and prayer. Krishna Sen says, alluding to R. K. Narayan's *My Days*, apropos of the incident:

A group of Brahmins stood on the parched bed of the river Kaveri, submerged up their knees in water which had been ferried to the spot at

great cost, fasting and chanting mantras for eleven days and nights. On the twelfth day the rains came, and the countryside was saved from the impending famine (3).

Narayan conceived *The Guide* as a conventionally Indian story concentrated on a characteristic strand of Indian life, the “vast Indian hinterland of semi-urban and rural settlements where people cherish traditional values, and old-world customs and beliefs still retain their hold” (Sen 5).

The uneven action of the novel revolves round the development of Raju, the protagonist, from his humble origins upwards to the status of a renowned tourist guide in Malgudi. Narayan makes Raju his mouthpiece to explore and investigate the psychological and situational complexities connected with enforcing of sainthood. As a tourist-guide he gets associated with Rosie, later renamed ‘Nalini’, a gifted dancer and as intricate a personality as Raju. She is abandoned by Marco on ground of her dalliance with Raju. Raju is convicted of forging Rosie’s signature and sent to jail. After his release from the jail, some circumstances beyond comprehension combine together to propel him to sainthood. Velan, a simple peasant from the village of Mangal, is instrumental at the hands of the circumstances combined in turning Raju into a swami, rather, a fake swami. Towards the end of the novel, Mangal and the neighbouring countryside come to grips with a severe drought owing to the failure of monsoon rains to pour down. The villagers, who regard him as their guru, insist, at the instance of Velan, on Raju undertaking to take on a ritual fast to propitiate the rain god. Raju cannot bring himself to disdain the faith they repose in his sainthood and gets down to the twelve-day ritual fast. On the eleventh day he collapses on the verge of death, articulating a strong intuition for the rains to come. “However, the denouement strongly suggests that Raju, the confidence trickster and fake sadhu, has redeemed himself through his self-sacrifice” (Sen 8).

Chapterwise Analysis

A chapterwise analysis can unearth the multi-faceted aspects of the novel. In the first chapter, the novel opens in medias res with “RAJU welcomed the intrusion – something to relieve the loneliness of the place” (Narayan 2003: 5), though, the novel maps out the story of Raju’s life from birth to death. Velan, who is worried over his step-sister’s unwillingness to marry the man he has chosen for her, meets with Raju sitting on the river bank and mistakes him for a holy man and seeks his advice. Raju agrees to speak to her. In this chapter we learn of part of Raju’s life narrated by him to Velan—his childhood spent at his father’s way-side hut shop and

at his home overlooking the site where the Malgudi railway station started being built.

Raju's reminiscence of his childhood continues into the second chapter and fills the first part of this chapter. He continues reminiscing about how he spent his childhood at the railway construction site and his trying to avoid going to school. The part brings us from the past to the present and we find him talking to Velan about his problem. Raju soft-talked Velan's defiant step-sister into agreeing to marry the man Velan has chosen for her. In fact, she is so impressed by his highly-coloured language that she even goes to the extent of apologizing to her elders for her defiance and accepts marrying the man. And this convinces the villagers of his supernatural powers. Raju's several attempts to escape are foiled by the villagers' faith in him and his supernatural powers. He has no alternative before him but to stay put in the place, acting out the role of a sadhu or Swami.

In the third chapter, Raju's childhood memory keeps on, zeroing in on the arrival of the first train at the Malgudi station to the benefit of his father's strategic food stall opposite the station, his father having amassed money by selling food to railway passengers who gathered around the stall to buy food so much so that he was able to buy a horse-drawn carriage and employ a groom and invested in a large grocery shop right on the platform. He put Raju in charge of the hut-shop to Raju's relief in that he had not to go to school any more.

The fourth chapter takes us forward to the present to watch Raju busy in convincing the villagers of the necessity of educating their children. Raju himself opens a school on the premises of the ruined river-side temple he has made his home. Though there is already a school master in the village, Raju takes it upon himself to teach the children. His fame spreads so far that even the parents of the children stop by, returning from their work in the fields to listen to Raju teach their children. Raju then gives himself over to ruminating on how he, after his father's death, had assumed control of the platform shop and reconstructed part of the shop into a stall filled with books and newspapers. He owes his knowledge that has impressed the villagers to the books and papers in the stall. Towards the end of the chapter, Raju has whipped up a large following and has grown a long hair and a beard which have established him as a swami.

In the fifth chapter, we find Raju once again reminiscing about how he has wafted out of the platform stall into the job of guiding willing passengers to sightseeing, which paves the way for him to become a full-fledged tourist-guide, to be known as Railway Raju. In the course of tourist-guiding passengers he comes across Rosie

and her scholar husband, peculiar and eccentric, and nicknames him 'Marco'. While Marco expresses his desire to photograph the carvings on the ancient caves high up on the Mempi Hill, because he intends to use the photograph in a book he is writing. Rosie articulates her desire to see a king cobra dance to the music of a snake-charmer's flute. Raju somehow manages to arrange it. He sees Rosie moving her body to the tune of the music of the snake-charmer's flute. He is convinced, Rosie is a gifted dancer and in course of time gets to know that Rosie has been born into a family of the despised low-caste temple dancers, and is in particular devoted to the Bharat Natyam. At the insistence of her mother she had been educated and even gone up to a university, receiving an MA in Economics incongruous with her profession. She was in response to an advertisement sort of forced into marrying Marco with eyes on social prestige. But this marriage has not fit into her nature. Her nature has threatened to be jeopardized, because Marco is opposed to her continuing dancing after the marriage, for it is unbecoming of a married woman to dance. With her nature unsatisfied and her nerves tinkling, she desperately clings to Raju as a way to revive her love for art by persuading Raju to arrange the cobra dance. Rosie and Raju happen to be of the kind that trickles them into falling in love with each other. There is not anything strong and frenzied about the affair, which undiscerning readers are likely to construe as being much of a critical point of nerves as of ardour or infatuation. Their relationship, as we shall get to know when Rosie breaks off with Marco to live with Raju, is not passionate but temperamental.

The sixth chapter hauls us from the past on to the present. Raju is now busy, deep in conversation with Velan and other villagers, taking on the role of a *sadhu*, holy man. Then bad news arrives of the severity of drought with the cattle dying, food getting scarce, consequent upon shopkeepers hoarding supplies and charging exorbitant prices. The villagers resort to fighting at the slightest provocation. Raju conciliates them, thus presenting himself to the villagers as their leader. One day villagers tell Raju they want for him to take on a ritual fast to bring the drought to an end, flinging Raju into horns of a dilemma. He is quite aware that he is no holy man possessing supernatural powers and decides to shed off his pretence to convince Velan he is no holy man.

The seventh chapter deals with Raju's confession to his affair with Rosie. Taking advantage of Marco's remaining engrossed with his work at the Peak house on the Mempi Hills Raju enjoys dallying with Rosie in a hotel in Malgudi. The reason why Rosie feels attracted to Raju is because she thinks that it is only Raju who can guarantee her a new lease of life by fuelling aflame her inherent ambition to dance

and her love for art. Rosie happens to confide to her husband in a careless remark, the secret of her innocent dalliance with Raju, propelled by her feeling of guilt of betraying her husband. Marco gets infuriated at her simple and honest confession which has a tinge of remorse, and departs from Malgudi, leaving her to fend for herself. Left helpless with nothing to do for herself, she takes shelter in the house of Raju to the dismay of his mother and uncle. Grappling with the problems foisted off on him by Rosie's presence and her dance, Raju starts neglecting attending to his profitable platform business so much so that he is served with a notice by the railway authorities to vacate the shop for someone else to take his place. But he has to look after the needs of his mother and Rosie without any other source of income.

The eighth chapter tells of the continuance of Raju's miseries with his main creditor, the Sait, suing him at court for recovery of a debt of over eight hundred rupees and his old friend Gaffur, the taxi driver, estranging himself from him, angered at his refusal to separate from Rosie. Exasperated and ashamed at this turn of events, Raju's mother leaves Raju's house to live away in her brother's house in the village. However, Raju is not disheartened at his mother's departure and perseveres in getting Rosie a foothold in dancing. His perseverance bears fruit. Due to his efforts, Rosie wangles herself her first dance engagement with an annual social of the Albert Mission School. In view of the prestige associated with her new identity as a Bharat Natyam exponent she takes on the stage name Nalini.

Chapter nine tells of Rosie's or Nalini's lightning rise as a classical dancer sending her up to the summit of fame which brings in huge money. Raju handles her fame and money as her agent and impresario. He takes nonchalantly the news of his father's old house having been sold by a court decree to the Sait to pay off his debt, as he lavishly lives in Rosie's mansion and rolls in wealth. Power and pelf he acquires at Rosie's expense gives unto him an opportunity to socialize with powerful and influential people. Wealth corrupts and it has corrupted Raju and has octopused him in greed. Rosie has grown meantime so obsessed with dancing Bharat Natyam as a worship offered to the Supreme Dancer Shiva-Nataraja that she has grown indifferent to power and pelf, Raju taking the advantage of her indifference. But she feels annoyed at the burden of heavy schedule Raju foists on her with a view to stashing away more and more money. His cosy existence at the expense of Rosie stands suddenly jeopardized by two incidents. Strangely enough, Marco sends to Rosie a copy of the book he has published on the Mampi Hill caves, which flings Raju unconfident about Rosie's staying on with him because of her admiration he fears of Marco's accomplishments. He conceals the copy from her. Unfortunately,

for him, Rosie happens to read a review of the book and gets to know of Raju's shaving concealed it. This discovery leads to a major riff in their relationship. In a few days Raju intercepts a letter addressed to Rosie by Marco's lawyers, seeking her signature on an enclosed document for a box of jewelry held under their joint signature in a bank. Fearing that Rosie might try to re-establish contact with Marco and not wishing to relinquish the claim to the jewelry, Raju stoops so low as to forge Rosie's signature on the document, which results in a few days in his being arrested on the charge of forgery.

In chapter ten, we see Rosie gets Raju out of the police lock-up on a bail of ten thousand rupees after Raju has stayed three days in the police custody, though their relationship has suffered a jolt. To her utter dismay, Rosie tumbles to the fact that Raju has squandered away all the money in the bank account in his pursuit of his lavish living. Though Rosie has refused to dance again, she has to resume dancing in order to be able to defray the expenses Raju's trial entails. She now gets along with her own career. When the trial begins, despite all the efforts of the 'adjournment lawyer' paid by Rosie to portray Raju's heroism in rescuing her from the claws of her diabolical husband, the circumstantial evidence obtained from Raju's secretary Mani, the postmaster and the handwriting expert goes against Raju and he is sentenced to a two-year imprisonment. But in the prison Raju behaves himself well, advising other inmates and teaching them moral lessons, thus acquiring the name 'Vadhyar' (teacher). His mother has died in the meanwhile. All his relatives, even Rosie have shunned him. Only his secretary Mani visits him when he is released, he finds himself alone in the world.

In chapter eleven, Raju finished his confession in the hope that Velan, having known of his past history, will not insist on him saving the villagers from the drought. But Velan remains unmoved from his earlier trance. He says, India has a long tradition of saints redeemed from sins or crimes to become saints, and believes that Raju is incarnated from that illustrious paradigm. Raju has no alternative but to undertake a ritual fast for twelve days, standing in the knee-deep water. On the eleventh day, extremely weak from the fast, he faints in the water, mumbling, "Velan, it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming under my feet, up my legs." (Narayan 2003: 147)

Transformation

As we have seen in the chapter-wise summary of the text of the novel, Velan, a simple peasant wields an immense influence over Raju and turns him from a criminal

into a saint. Though he looks a fake saint at first, he redeems himself, succumbing to Velan's simple faith. When, just released from the prison, Raju has spent the whole day, sitting in the sacred place in loneliness; Velan intrudes into the loneliness. Raju welcomes the intrusion and grabs it as something comes to relieve him of the loneliness. He drags him into an intimate conversation. Velan, ritually purified sitting beneath, augurs "the ambiguity of relationship on Raju's side [and] certainty of it on the peasant's" (Walsh 116). To Raju his intrusion appears as a happy break in his isolation and a happy relief in the loneliness and for the peasant Raju has come over to fill a vacancy.

It was good to hear the human voice again. After this the villager resumes the study of his face with intense respect. And Raju stroked his chin thoughtfully to make sure that an apostolic beard had not suddenly grown there. It was still smooth. He had had his last shave only two days before and paid for it with the hard-earned coins of his jail life. (Narayan 2003: 06)

William Walsh writes,

Raju fits into the context of the sacred shrine; he completes it and revives; the character that Raju presents to him is one absorbed from the stones of the temple. But it isn't just the accident of place which gives him this conviction. It is Raju's fate to be the product of other people's convictions. (116)

Again William Walsh comments,

In his (Raju's) nature there is developed to the point of extremity what exists in all of us to some degree – the quality of suggestiveness to the desires of others. Plasticity of response in most of us is limited by an unyielding core of self. It operates only so far as the bias of a nature allows. But in Raju it was the centre of his nature and an influence at each phase of his odd character. (116-17)

The passage quoted above shines a particular torchlight onto the blending of a firm line and suggestive shadow on Raju's inability to grapple with the role devolved upon him by Velan. Raju is here in the novel particularizing that human type in whom character co-exists with certain amorphousness. The messianic part offered to him by Velan, which is hinted at from the beginning suggests itself in the beginning. Raju feels himself falling into a situational trap; he is quite conscious of the fantastic absurdity linked to this particular role, trying his best to suppress the embarrassment at his having been just released from jail. Yet he has to force himself into putting on

the air of one rightly deserving respect. To divulge his own feeling in this situation would mean shaking Velan's faith and it goes against Raju's nature to sting another's feeling. In the words of Walsh,

While the pseudo-prophet's regard for the peasant's feelings works to make Raju all the more amenable to Velan's will, the peasant's deference to him doesn't at all mitigate against the force of his influence on Raju. Politeness, which makes the apparently impressive Raju even more pliable, also makes the humbly deferent Velan the more effective. (117)

This politeness makes disappear the social or class difference between Raju and Velan. Velan's simplicity and faith determines Raju's fate. The villager on the lower step looked up at his face with devotion, which irked Raju "Why do you look at me like that?" The man replied, "I don't know. I don't mean to offend you, sir." Raju wanted to blurt out, "I am here because I have nowhere else to go. I want to be away from people who may recognise me." But he hesitated, wondering how he should say it. It looked as though he would be hurting the other's deepest sentiment if he so much as whispered the word "jail". He tried at least to say, "I am not so great as you imagine. I am just ordinary." Before he could fumble and reach the words, the other said, "I have a problem, sir." "Tell me about it," Raju said, "the old, old habit of affording guidance asserting itself..." (Narayan 2003: 8-9)

Here Raju feels himself flung into a fake sainthood and there is no way out in sight of it. But one cannot help perceiving a sense of unity which eliminates all the differences of experience, education and candidness between Raju and Velan and brings them into close intimacy, emboldening Velan, on the one hand, to take Raju into his confidence about his family problem centering on his sister's refusal to marry the man he has chosen and Raju, on the other, to treat Velan to his life-story in an endeavour to tell him how he comes over here to become a holy man in this sacred place.

Here we notice an unbroken connection between Raju, the guide and Raju, the prophet. In both the cases he lived for others. In both the roles Raju played as the tourist-guide and as the prophet encircled by devout villagers all eagerness to see a miracle occur at his behest or a message come through him, otherness was reflected in his character. He is projected as a pliable form quick in assuming any shape which may be needed.

So extreme a degree of accommodation means that Raju's sincerity consists in being false, and his positive existence is being a vacancy filled by others.

The events leading from the beginning to the conclusion of Raju's career, the links between the guide in the railway station and the swami in the temple, make up a natural, realistic sequence. (Walsh 122)

Velan and Rosie are no less important characters than Raju. Velan acted as a catalyst to the transformation of Raju from the tourist guide to the swami, from the ordinary to the extraordinary and Rosie as a fuel to ignite the fire dormant in Raju's mind. Raju's imprisonment redeemed him from the guilt he had developed while handling Rosie's earnings. Rosie also owes a great deal to Raju so much so that she has bailed Raju out and paid for his trial. The relationship between Rosie and Raju, though construed as passionate at the beginning, assumes a different character in the course of the development of their relationship. This primarily personal relationship gradually develops into a primary function or official relationship. Raju recognizes Rosie's dancing gift and encourages her to rigorously apply her talent to rising to the height.

Conclusion

The story narrated in the novel (*The Guide*) bears a close affinity with the Panchatantra tale of a thief transformed into a saint by the devotion of the inmates of the house he had entered to steal. Disguised as a saint, the main character of the novel gives the readers a clear impression that the novel is but the modernization of this Panchatantra tale.

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Ethnic Cleansing in Bangladesh with Special Reference to Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja*

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Abstract

The Bengali people are an ethno-linguistic group dwelling in the Bengal region of South Asia. Speaking Bengali mostly, its native population is divided between the independent country, Bangladesh and the Indian states by name, West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and some pockets of Manipur.

The Indian subcontinent has a chequered history of intolerance of religious character, particularly since 1947 when British India was vivisected into Hindu-dominated India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. However, religious solidarity could not keep Pakistan intact as it was partitioned in 1971, forming Bangladesh, the erstwhile East Pakistan, based on linguistic lines as the rulers imposed Urdu on East Pakistan, to the consternation of Bengalis. In the ensuing bloody war, India poked its nose into the embroiled warfare as minorities started pouring in and so it sent its troops aiding the people of East Pakistan and ensuring freedom of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has prided itself on its secular credentials since it gained independence from Pakistan in 1971. Though the constitution stipulates Islam as the state religion, it also upholds the principle of secularism. But analysts point out that hard-line Islamist groups have gained prominence over the years who have failed to tackle the rising religious intolerance and fundamentalism. "The government has for political expediency compromised with the fundamentalist forces, particularly in the backdrop

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of constrained democratic polity” (Nasrin 78). They copy a leaf from the book of their counterparts, Bharatiya Janata Party (of India), though less aggressive, owing to the established Indian democratic polity and solid secular foundations. The paper seeks to explore ethnic cleansing as comprehended in *Lajja* (1993).

Keywords: Ethnic cleansing, fundamentalism, secularism, intolerance, democracy

The term, ethnic cleansing, is analogous to mass murder or extermination, genocide, final solution or holocaust. The main intent is to blot out a particular community or race from a geographical location with the active connivance of the state machinery. Ethnic cleansing have several faces – victimization, political repression, unjust incarceration, massacres, mayhem and genocide. It is really a travesty to see that the term ‘ethnic’ was originally used to denote different racial and cultural groups. It has been used to root out a particular group belonging to a large community. Bengalis are the fourth-largest ethnic group in the world, after the Han Chinese, Anglo-Saxons and Arabs. Thus, they are the second largest ethnic group within the Indo-Europeans. Bengali Muslims, who live mainly in Bangladesh, primarily belong to the Sunni denomination. However, in the Indian subcontinent, ethnic cleansing has generally taken the form of religious persecution of minorities under some pretext. Divided into two parts, the paper explores the issue in question followed by the plot of the novel, *Lajja* in the first section and the thematic engagement of the issue in the second part.

I

The term minority is generally used in pejorative sense and it denotes feebleness and powerlessness of a community instilling fear psychosis and triggering inferiority complex that they are hopelessly doomed to be on the margins. Bangladesh has been dominated by Sunni Muslims, who, by and large, have wedded to pluralism and religious tolerance. Nonetheless, the rise of communal-minded minuscule of strong nexus of economically strong Muslims, who are able to pull strings, are on the pedestal in the corridors of political power, seek to expect the minorities to conduct their lives at the majority’s beck and call.

Communal forces have been on rampage despite strong democratic institutions in the subcontinent. The misery of Hindus in Bangladesh is perhaps more appalling for the Muslim youngsters run amuck exploiting the minorities in all the ways owing to the cultural lag and “economic instability”. Communal forces are blind proponents of parochial notions of safeguarding the interests of community and with their dubious activities keep on stroking flames of hatred and flagrant notions of religious intolerance,

having been blind to the real nature of fears which are basically resultant of economic insecurity. Thus the expression, ethnic cleansing, is intended to press into service to mobilize people by harping on pseudo-religious sentiments, making their respective religions either dogmatism or skewed religious fundamentalism. Ethnic cleansing has yet to be recognised as an independent crime under international law. The term was first used in the 1990s pertaining to the conflicts arising from the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Ethnic cleansing is generally taken recourse by a religious group with the tacit conspiracy of the state to exterminate another group employing brutal methods. Therefore, it brings about post-traumatic stress disorder as it can be perceived by the agony of many in the minorities, depression as well as other forms of psychological morbidity, massive psychic trauma as shown in the novel, *Lajja*.

Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja* is an artistic indignant expression response against the anti-Hindu riots that surfaced continually in large chunks of Bangladesh, after the demolition of the Babri mosque in India on 6 December 1992. The novel clearly brings out the fact that communal sentiments were whipped up to the dismay of the Hindu minority of Bangladesh who were ruthlessly subjected to all sorts of inhuman treatment. Taslima Nasrin, in her realistic narration, sheds light on the traumatic experiences of a Hindu family caught in the vortex of religious persecution. The thrust of the novel is about the family of Duttas consisting of four focal characters – Sukumar Dutta, Kiranmoyee who are husband and wife and their son and daughter, Suranjan and Maya.

II

The focus of the novel is the exodus of the minorities and the studied malfeasance of the Muslims to force the minorities either to conversion into Islam or leave Bangladesh for good. The predicament of the Hindus in particular and other non-Muslims in general in Bangladesh as evidenced in *Lajja* could not be mitigated owing to the passivity of state. The communal forces ran berserk preying upon the Hindus after the demolition of the Babri mosque. Taslima Narin's novel, *Lajja*, shows how the blatant discrimination against the minorities results in the minority complex of the Hindus in Bangladesh.

In the post-demolition of the Babri mosque, the events that take place in Bangladesh make the Hindus despair of any prospects. Blatant intolerance to minorities and disregarding some of their natural rights, legitimizing discrimination against them make the minorities shudder with fear. On many an occasion, the

Hindus are the targets of public wrath and the butt of their laughter. Like many postcolonial societies, which have failed to catch up with the pace of development with the rest of the world and are “locked themselves in the politics of blame” (34) as Said observes in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). The Muslims, clinging to fundamentalism and refusing to switch over to modernity, direct their ire against their fellow countrymen, Hindus, at every slightest pretext. They are cowed into submission and are denied to some of the privileges and rights bestowed upon the majority. In *Lajja*, Nirmalendu Goon, who confines himself in a rented room after the riots that broke out in the wake of the demolition of the Babri mosque, makes a clinical observation regarding the precarious position of the minorities in India and Bangladesh: “The Muslims in India are in a position to fight, because India is a secular state. Here, power is in the hands of the fundamentalists. There is no scope to fight in this country. The Hindus here are second-class citizens” (Nasrin 81).

Instigating violence against Hindus and perpetrating indignities on them become commonplace activities in postcolonial Bangladesh. Suranjan considers himself a nonentity in its milieu. He is a staunch atheist but traumatized as he has been, he loiters about the streets unheeding the danger to his life. As he moves into a street, he comes upon a pariah dog howling at him and he is terrified to the core. At the same time he hears the shrieks of some boys running after him and calling names. Without turning back, he runs as fast as his legs can carry him. His body breaks into a sweat but he keeps running. He stops at a corner and looks back furtively but cannot find a trace of humanity around him. All this connotes how individuals are struck down with minority complex when the majority is skewed to screw up the minorities. The complex is resultant of the high-handedness of the majority who are hell bent on subjugating and vassalizing the non-Muslims in general and Hindus in particular. They caused much suffering to Sudhamoy, Niranjan’s father and forced him to wed to Islam. They are so dogmatic that they have mutilated his penis to make him a Muslim but the irony is that he is a staunch atheist. Later, his wife has been frightened and so she has stopped applying *sindoor* – vermilion mark that adorns the forehead of Hindu married women. Sudhamoy considers himself an atheist and communist, and Bangladeshi. It is ironical to see that he is not a practising Hindu but he is labelled as a Hindu. He has to sell away his ancestral property for a pittance. Their fate remains the same even later after the formation of Bangladesh. It is sheer travesty that the communal forces, generally backed up by the state, have succeeded to make his atheist son communal-minded.

The violent acts whipped up show the seamy side of the state right from the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. It openly panders to majority communalism, which is more dangerous than minority communalism because the former tries to wipe out minorities or compel them to practise the religion of the majority. Nasrin portrays the plight of the Hindus as discrimination against them is deeply institutionalized. The riots in the wake of the demolition of the temple is not the new trend, rather, it has always been a part of the country's political ethos dominated by Islamic ideologies. In the wake of the tearing down the Babri mosque, Muslim mobs in Bangladesh take to streets attacking the Hindus' homes. Nasrin reveals the brutality of the mob without mincing words. While the Hindus, like Sudhamoy and his family members, are waiting in their homes, the Muslim mob passing by their house rants and raves in all its fury: "Hindus, if you want to live, leave this country and go away" (Nasrin 100). Scores of Hindus are tortured and done to death and hundreds of Hindu temples have been razed to the ground. The attacks on them as shown in the novel are incited clandestinely under the nose of the government. The Sikh mob is followed by a Muslim one. Lenny in Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1988) watches the mayhem and conveys it through a powerful image: "Every short while a group of men, like a whirling eddy, stalls, and like the widening circles of a treacherous eddy dissolving in the mainstream, leaves in its centre the pulpy red flotsam of a mangled body" (35). As Kajal Debnath is agitated as Hindus are treated as second-class citizens and they are not considered to be an integral part of the social milieu. There is no Hindu in the administration. Since the formation of Pakistan, no Hindu has been appointed to the post of a secretary in government service. As awful reality stares into his face, Sudhamoy has resolved to leave for India with a great burden in his heart.

As communal virus preys on people, they fall upon one another with the ferocity of cannibals intending to chase the minorities out of their own lands. In *Tamas*, the Hindus and Sikhs have pulled out of Muslim areas and the Muslims have evacuated from the Hindu and Sikh pockets. In *Azadi* (1979), there is a mention about the Hindu population, which has been either driven out or completely exterminated. It is the show of strength and unable to withstand minorities run away from their own land. Running for life, Ranna in *Cracking India* comes upon a deserted village. Barring some animals, there is no one residing in it and the village puts on a deserted look. Later he watches the lurid scene of the mob of Sikhs and Hindus approaching the village. What happened to the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in 1947 across in some pockets in northern India was a genocide or ethnic cleansing, a precedent to another ethnic cleansing that took place at the birth of Bangladesh.

The treatment meted out to the Hindus in eastern Pakistan, later called Bangladesh, is tantamount to ethnic cleansing. Unable to withstand torture and onslaughts on their life, the Hindus start pouring in into India. Sudhamoy in *Lajja* cannot prevail upon many Hindus not to migrate but they brush aside his pleas as they dread hooliganism. The demolition of the Babri mosque has incurred the wrath of the Muslims and fearing assaults; the Hindus leave the country for good. The statistical information furnished by the novelist corroborates the fact that the Hindu population is on the decrease over the years: "In 33.1 per cent of the population of East Bengal was Hindu ... In the early 1990s Hindus constituted around twenty per cent of the population" (Nasrin 10). It stands to reason that they have been driven out or else they, resenting the unfair treatment as aliens in their own land, move towards an uncertain address like hunted deer. Nasrin reasons out the unjustifiable stance of fundamental forces in Bangladesh, though unjust on any account, were incited by Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party in India who masterminded the demolition of Babri mosque.

The vulnerability of women and their metamorphosis into possessions during holocaust is dealt in the novel. Nasrin gives a graphic description of the dangers that plague young women in Bangladesh. The local boys besides bullying, intimidate them, saying that they would abduct them. Sudhamoy narrates the story of a young girl whose sari has been stripped off in the middle of the street by a gang of boys. Sudhamoy reflects that it is the question of the weak bulldozed by the strong but not an issue of exploitation based on religion. Since women are vulnerable, men would like to put down them with an air of oppression. Hindu Bengali women live in utter disgrace and face inhuman treatment and discrimination.

The novelist examines succinctly the power relations existing among different persons and the trauma that such relations entail. The visitation of Maya's memories is so strong and profound that Suranjan, the Hindu boy, even in a state of drunkenness, shocked his friends by suddenly bursting into tears. He rests his head on a friend's shoulder and cries bitterly. He rolls on the filthy floor in anguish and his dirty cloths become even grimmer. Then comes the return of the repressed, which remains alive in the unconscious. "They took Maya away last night" (Nasrin 70). Again on seeing a Hindu girl, he thinks of Maya: "How many of them were raping her at the same time? Five or seven? Or even more? Was Maya bleeding profusely?" (Nasrin 175). Suranjan is ashamed of entering his father's room, as though the shame of Maya's abduction is entirely his responsibility. He is so traumatized that he rapes a Muslim

girl. The unconscious hatred for Muslims which surfaces on and off, and leaving discretion and decency, molested her with all brutality.

Maya was wrongfully retained, concealed causing psychological trauma to the members of the family. Her abduction has brought about traumatic effects not only on the abducted one and the searching parents and her brother but also on the community in the vicinity. Gradually their health breaks down. There is loss of communication for days together among the members of the family. After this incidence she does not talk to anybody. "How strange she was – unresponsive, unrelenting and as unemotional as a corpse" (Nasrin 194). Suranjan is also unable to speak and so he pretends to be asleep. The eerie silence that haunts the house does not go unnoticed by Sudhamoy. His plight is like that of Kanshi Ram in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* who has gone through the same living inferno and finds himself before a long tunnel where he cannot see the other end. He feels so exposed, so naked and so defenseless that he stops wearing a turban, a symbol of dignity, since he has no dignity left. To top it all, along with the members of his family he finds himself at a loss of contact and of communication. After the partition trauma, they can neither share their feelings, nor put their thoughts into words that are too meagre to convey their anguish. The loss of communication throws them into a whirlpool of complete isolation and alienation, and making each a prisoner of his or her single self.

The tolerant ethos of the people living in the subcontinent as brought out by *Lajja* in particular and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Shashi Tharoor's *Riot* in general, can offer a workable solution. Whether Hindu or Muslim, the people engage in a broad spectrum of artistic activity. Both Hindus and Muslims worship local deity deo, in *Train to Pakistan* (1975). They share the *Hindustani* classical music and dance tradition, while they also appreciate nonclassical popular forms of their counterparts. Syncretic practices, in fact, should be appreciated and promoted and they will certainly mitigate the issue of blatant intolerance and religious persecution leading to ethnic cleansing.

Conclusion

To root out any community on the face of a particular country is unjust and an anathema in democratic polity bringing about great loss to the ethos of a country like India or Bangladesh. It also thwarts the pace of development of its economy as it had been unstable and this would be further aggravated owing to predominance of fundamentalism at the expense of national development. In *Lajja*, Suranjan

contemplates ruefully: "... that in a poor country inhabited by people of various religions and castes, only the dissemination of one religion was favoured ... How can we spend so much money on Islamic matters when the economy is completely crippled" (Nasrin 186). What hurts him most is not the religious persecution but the forced identity thrust upon him by an anarchic system and his total inability to hold out any resistance. He shows predilection to migrate to India which does not compel him to embrace any creed against his wishes. A theocratic state or a state steeped in religious fundamentalism cannot live up to expectations of its citizens. Brushing aside genuine economic issues and ingenious ways to address legitimate grievances of people on the important economic front, Bangladesh pandered to whims and fancies of the lunatic fringe and its people wallowed in rabid discriminatory practices which are against the tenets of Islam. Given the ripple effect, India should also guard itself and stem in the tide of rabid forces of fundamentalism while strengthening its democratic and secular institutions and practices of syncretism by people of different faiths. It can safely be inferred the societies which have wedded to true democratic practices will flourish as they can safeguard diverse identities of people with a spirit of bonhomie.

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Challenges of Literary Translation with Reference to Maithili Literature: A Critique

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Abstract

Although Maithili literature has been very rich yet there is huge crisis of English translation in this field. English Translation has potential to bring Maithili literature on the map of the world literatures since translation is the conduit of cross cultural communication and dissemination of knowledge. We take the cognizance of the world through translation in this 21st century and if we want to make our society a 'knowledge society' then we have to accept and embrace translation as a vehicle to achieve our goal. Translation has been emerged as a disseminating and democratizing force in the realm of all disciplines and discourses since the history of human civilization.

This research paper explores the poetics and politics of English translation of Maithili literature in general and Maithili fiction in particular. It seeks to examine the problems and prospects of translating Maithili fiction. It also tries to trace the history, principles and practice of English translation in the field of Maithili literature. It also tries to delve deep into the linguistic and cultural barriers that a translator encounters while translating Maithili literary texts. We have been witness to the fact that translation has made local literature as global literature, for instance, Bengali literature. So, this research paper also devises and discovers the ways and means which can

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pave the way for how to make Maithili literature as a global literature (local to global), and it is only possible through translation.

Keywords: Translation, Maithili literature, World literatures, problems, prospects, poetics and politics

Introduction

A couplet in Shri Ramacharitamansa by Goswami Tulsidas highlights the role and relevance of translation in the 21st century.

Ati apaar je saritbar jon nrip setu karahin

Chadhi pipeelikau param laghu binu shrama paarahi jaahin

(Baalkand, Shlok 13, p. 38).

(If kings get bridges constructed over big rivers, which are too broad, even the tiniest ants cross them without exertion.)

The above couplet displays the role and responsibility of translation as a bridge across the cultures in the 21st century since it is a ‘knowledge century’. All the literary texts exhibit linguistic features and socio-cultural characteristics. Therefore, literary translation has that power and potential to become the medium for cross cultural communication. Houaria Chaal remarks in his popular essay “Literary Translation Difficulties: Cultural Barriers” that “The diversity of language, the variety of cultures and necessity of communication in human life caused translation to be a very effective factor in communicating, exchanging cultures and knowledge” (134).

Translation has become the part and parcel of our life. Therefore, it has been said that “Every act of communication is an act of translation” (Singh 2014: 7). Translation is such a Powerful tool that is essential for generation, dissemination and democratization and preservation of knowledge in the 21st century knowledge society. Local literature can become global through translation and we have seen it in the case of Bengali literature. Tagore got Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 since his *Gitanjali* got translated into English. All regional/local literatures have potential and literary merits to come up to the level of world literatures. Just we need to disseminate it across the globe through translation. Maithili literature is one of such regional literature which has been ignored by writers and translators, therefore, it has not been able to catch the attention of the world. There are many great poets and writers such as Vidyapati, Hari Mohan Jha, Raj Kamal Chaudhari, Baba Nagarjun, Lalit, etc. in Maithili literature whose works are of great literary value and merits

but due to certain orthodox and political reasons it is dying in its own courtyard. There is huge crisis of translation in Maithili literature, therefore, it has not yet been reached the non-Maithili readers or speakers. Many great works have been written and published but there is acute crisis of readership as even Maithili speakers do not read Maithili texts. If great texts of Maithili will be translated into English, a global language, then it will get national and international readers. Why Maithili texts are not being translated? The problems are multi-layered. There is a plethora of reasons for this such as

1. Maithili writers seem to be hesitant in allowing translators/scholars/ academicians to translate their texts.
2. There is a monopoly of a particular caste or class on Maithili language and literature as they think that they are the only right inheritors and others cannot touch it. Due to this reason it has not been disseminated and it has become stranger in its own courtyard. We need to free Maithili language and literature from its Brahminical orthodoxy/monopoly.
3. There are many Maithili writers who write for *Swantah sukhay* (self-pleasure) and to get some kind of awards and recognitions but they do not encourage youngsters and others irrespective of their caste, colour and creed to join this venture and enrich this tradition.
4. There is lack of political will to enrich and connect/link this language to education and employment so that it will get market value in this age of globalization and marketization.

If we want to globalize and democratize Maithili language and literature then we need to translate Maithili literature into English as much as possible since translation has that power and potential to transform literature and transcend the linguistic, cultural, geographical and political boundaries. The sooner we give up this hypocritical linguistic pride and prejudice, the better it would be for Maithili language and literature. Let this language and literature flow like the water of the river and merge into to the ocean of the world literatures.

Literary Translation: Problems and Perspectives

The practice of literary translation is different from translating knowledge texts. However, the act of translation in itself is complex and it becomes more taxing and arduous when we practise literary translation. There are several issues pertaining to the problems of literary translation which need to be addressed properly so that the

dignity of the author, originality of the texts, loyalty to the target readers, and beauty of translation must be maintained. Like a mediator, the job of translation is to make both parties (authors and target readers) happy, satisfied and convinced, and this task of translator is not easy as it seems to be at the surface level. Robert Brooks, in his blog *Challenges of Translating Literature*, remarks on this issue stating that “One of the key challenges of literary translation is the need to staying faithful to the original work with the need to create something unique and distinctive that will evoke the same feeling and responses as the original” (1).

The politics of translation is also involved in this activity since it is not an innocent act as it appears to be. Like history, translation is not objective but subjective. The negation of the self, emotions and personality are essential for true artists so is for the translators. Like any other artists, translators are also great artists and they need to escape their emotions and ideologies, prejudices and biases for becoming better and greater translators. Daniel Hahn, the director of the British Centre for Literary Translation, sums up the issues of literary translation:

There is not a single word in any of the languages I translate that can map perfectly onto a word in English. So, it’s always interpretative, approximate, creative. Anything that is, itself, ‘linguistic’ quality will by definition be anchored in a particular language - whether it’s idioms, ambiguity or assonance. All languages are different (qtd. in Brooks 2017: 2).

Hahn hints at the problems of exploring equivalent terms/words in translating literary texts since the words or expressions of source language cannot perfectly match to those of in the target language. He also emphasizes on couples of skills- interpretation and creativity which translators should master to produce effective translation. Nida states that

since no two languages are identical either in meanings given to corresponding symbols, or ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. . . No fully exact translation . . . the impact may be closely to the original but no identity in detail (1964: 126).

Urdu language translator Fahmida Riaz outlines her approach to such thorny issues: “Every piece you translate comes from the pen of an individual, so you have to give it an individual treatment. I try to retain the ambience of original culture, rather than the language, as it is reflected in the texts” (qtd. in Brooks 2017: 2).

According to Fahmida, loyalty to source culture is essential for the translators to produce authentic literary translation. She is also in favour of developing and devising approaches and strategies depending upon the kind of authors-texts we are undertaking for the project of translation. There cannot be any single methods/approaches/strategies which will fit into all the literary texts of the world.

Boas in his *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (2013) accepts “the form of language will be moulded by the state of that culture” (63). It is evident from this statement that cultures do influence literary translation. And language is also the product of culture which we adopt/practise. This issue of language and culture produces a plethora of problems for translators who practise literary translation particularly regional/Anchalik literature like Maithili. Kashi Prasad is very much concerned with translators of Indian languages and states that

The translator has to catch the spirit of the original. What does the word spirit mean? The word appears to have become a cliché. It means breath, the vital force. It is not making contact with any individual writer but with an entire culture, with a value system. It is this spirit which is sought to be conveyed through translation (1982: 86).

So, the job of a translator is to follow the original texts through any approach or method. It is also the duty of the translator to make the culture alive when it comes to the practice of literary translation. Anthony Burgess is of the view that “Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making whole culture intelligible” (1984: 4). Now it is evident that literary translation is not just a linguistic act but also a cultural practice. So, translation is inherently a cultural affair and activity.

Language is also the product of its culture and, so, it is not dissociated from its culture. Culture is the part and parcel of any language and translation. Inter-language translation poses a plethora of problems, prospects, challenges and threats. The task of the translator becomes complex and very difficult since “he has to serve the two masters- the ST author and TT recipient” (Mannikar 2020: 64). The complexity of culture and language is quite profound in Maithili literature and it makes the activity of translation challenging and problematic. It is one of the reasons that there is acute crisis of English translation of Maithili literature since no scholar/academician/translator attempts to translate it. Larson addresses this critical issue. He writes that “one of the most difficult problems facing a translator is how to find lexical equivalence for objects and events which are not known in the target culture” (163).

Challenges of Translating Maithili Literature

I will also share my personal experiences as a translator which I have realized/faced during translating Maithili stories and novels. I will discuss some of the relevant examples from Harimohan Jha's short stories "Kanyak Jiwan", "Babak Samskar" and "Graduate Putauhu" and Lalit's novel *Prithviputra* (2012). There are many problems/challenges in translating Maithili novels, short stories, poems, plays and essays. The similar challenges are also figured and faced by translators when they translate Hindi literary texts into English. Translators have to face serious challenges in translating phrases, idioms, proverbs, symbols, metaphors, images, titles of the texts, satirical and humorous expressions, cultural terms, etc. Due to these problematic issues, translation of poetry is very challenging and complex. These problems are universal in all the literatures of the world. Despite all these challenging issues, there is nothing which is untranslatable. For translators, linguistic and cultural diversity may seem to be obstacles but it is an opportunity which needs to be celebrated. Since India is a multilingual and multicultural country where knowledge exists in different languages and cultures, we need to consider "translation as a bridge between knowledges and cultures", as it has been rightly stated by Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh in his essay "Celebrating Translation as a Bridge between Knowledges and Cultures". Venuti views it as

translation is a process that aims for looking at similarities between language and culture, but it does this because it is constantly facing dissimilarities. It can never and should never aim to remove these dissimilarities entirely. A translated text should be the site at which different cultures emerge, where a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other and resistency. A translation strategy based on an aesthetic discontinuity can best preserve, the differences, the otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and unbridgeable gaps between cultures (305).

The following are several challenges that one faces as a translator while translating Maithili fiction since it is packed with cultural and linguistic peculiarities.

1. Translating Maithili Titles of Short Stories and Novels

"Kanyak Jiwan," "Babak Samskar," "Ghar Jamai," "Sasurak Chinh," "Totmaa," "Vikat Paahun," *Kanyaadan*, *Dwiraagman* all by Hari Mohan Jha; *Madhushrawani* by Shailendra Mohan Jha; *Vidaagari* by Chandra Narayan Mishra; *Gaam Sungait* by Vibhuti Anand; *Son Dayak Sohag* by Prof. Hansraj; *Gaam Wali* by Sushil; *Laal Bhauji* by Indra Narayan;

Vaatbhaksha by Usha Kiran Khan; *Agnibaan* by Jeevkant; *Navturiya* by Yatri, etc.

2. Translating Regional Expressions

Besi lub lub nai karu, aangan me chaur chhatait chhalon, raahar ulbait chhalhi je khapari pataik ka daurlih, kharam khat khatbait baahar ka gelah, chhaur lagaakar sat sa jeebh kheench lebaih, dunu haath aanchal jodi sausak charan sparsh kailnih, dur jo dhur batah, aekhan dhari bhak bhakaa rahal achhi.

3. Translating Cultural Expressions or Terms

Kharaam, naihar, sasur, aai-mai, neepal, naagdahwali, sharbat, teetar dai, jhaadphunk, kanyadaan, dwiragman, sindurdaan, mangalsutra, godaan, bhatij, bhagin, bhauji, saali, amot, pidhi, ojhai, nanadi, shradhak bhoj, maaldah aam, Gangajal, saaun, bhadwak.

4. Translating Phrases and Idioms

Lanka me sabse chhot se unchaas haath (Proverb), chaalani dusalak soop ke jinka bahatar ta chhed (Proverb), sikka par chadhaa rahal chhathi (phrase), gad gad bha gelaah (Idiom), Gangalaabh karaabay (Idiom), mana changaa ta kathauti me Ganga (Idiom).

5. Translating Symbols/Image/Metaphors

Maduaa khet me kahun kesar lagait achhi.

6. Translating Figures of Speech

Je aehi ghar me aelih se gelih (Paradox), jaun abitainh rakhane ta prithvi par pairo na dharti (Hyperbole), ol san kab kab bol kiyek bajai chhi (Alliteration), aha loknik muh me lagaam achhi (Sandeha Alankar), naihar sa ekta kag-kauaa ta aebai ne karai chhainh (Simile).

7. Translating Satirical and Humorous Expressions

Dur jo! ehan taad gaachh kahun maugi bhelay, hamar naak kataa rahal achhi aur oo apan swasth banbait chhathi, aekpithiya nahi pitiaayun kahiau, Srikant ta okda agaan chhuchhun lagait chhathinh, vaastav me ee maugi jag jitne chhai, jena aankhik paani jhari gel hoik, sasurak aeilaapar maath jhapalkaik, anhun chatkaar karait chhi, je ang strik lajja thikaik se ta jhapnahi nai chhal, aaur ahan ke kewal maathe taa sujhait achhi.

Analysis of the Above Mentioned Challenges of Translating Maithili Literature

The major issues that a translator encounters in translating Maithili literature are based on linguistic and socio-cultural peculiarities which seem to be a Herculean task. First of all, translating titles of any Maithili literary texts, for instance, “Babak Samskar,” *Kanyaddan*, *Dwiragman*, *Madhushravani*, *Prithvi Putra*, etc... are problematic. This task is very taxing since these titles are rooted in cultural ethos which is not there in the culture of the target language. The cultural practices/rituals like *samskar*, *kanyadan*, *dwiraagman*, *madhushravani*, etc. are not practised in western culture therefore there is a crisis of equivalent terms/expression in the target language. It is not the case only with English language but all the languages of the world. It is also the same issue with all the Indian languages within India. The translator faces similar problems when s/he translates titles of Hindi literature such as *Godaan*, *Mangal Sutra* (novels by Premchand), “Kafan”, “Sava Ser Gehu”, “Pus ki Raat” (stories by Premchand) etc. So, cultural diversity and peculiarity add to the level of linguistic difficulties for the translators. Apart from translating titles, translating other cultural terms and expressions, for instance, *kharam* (roughly translated as wooden sleeper), *dalaan*, *sindurdaan*, *aangan*, *Gangajal*, *shradhk bhoj*, *nanad*, *bhauji*, *saali* (all the kinship terms), names of Hindi months, so many and so forth, in Maithili literary texts, are deeply rooted in customary cultural practice and superstitious customs. These words create cultural barriers which hint at untranslatability. However, it is almost impossible to find exact and correct equivalent in the target language and culture since above mentioned customary activities do not exist in another culture. If these things are not the part and parcel of any culture, they cannot exist in language as language is a by-product of socio-cultural activities. Nida points out the difficulty level of such complicated cultural gaps “differences between cultures may cause severe complications for the translators than do differences in language structure” (1964: 130).

However, the challenges mentioned above at the no. 4, 5, 6 and 7 are fundamentally based on linguistic differences which display lexical, syntactical and dialectical variations and peculiarities in any two different languages of the world. Since no two different languages of the world are identical in any ways, so, exactness and appropriateness in literary translation is a myth. Nida also remarks that

Since no two languages are identical either in meanings given to corresponding symbols, or in ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages . . . no fully exact translation . . . the impact may be reasonably close to the original but no identity in detail (1964: 126).

Linguistic barrier, in translation, refers to difficulty in translating phrases, idioms, proverbs, symbols and metaphors, figures of speech, satirical and humorous expressions, so many so forth. Maithili texts are pregnant with such linguistic terms and expressions, for examples, *mana changa ta kathauti me Ganga* (If the mind is pure then the river Ganga is in every container of water.), *maduaa khet me kahun kesar laglaik achhi* (Kesar does not grow in *maduaa* field.), *oal san kab kab bol kiyak bajai chhi* (Why you speak so bitter as *oal* ?), *aekpithiya nahi pitiaayun kahiau* (Don't say that she is similar in age, say that she is his aunt.). They need to be tackled tactfully in English translation. Literary translation of these types of linguistic expressions in Maithili texts poses a serious challenge for the task of a translator. The question of appropriateness of being 'right and wrong' and 'loss in translation' are something that bothers in the mind of the most of the Maithili writers. They demand exact/absolute translation which is almost impossible since they forget that translation is also a creative act and no two languages are identical. However, the crisis of exact equivalent lexical expressions does not hamper the practice of literary translation. Instead, it allows the translator to devise and discover innovative strategy that should be both creative and critical to tackle these problematic peculiarities of any language. R. S. Pathak also addresses this consequential matter.

The translator therefore has to bear in mind that there are no exact synonyms even in the same language and its dialects and that a language is not merely a medium through which experience is communicated but is something inseparable from the experience it communicates. Being a unique way of looking at undifferentiated reality, it invests its words with particular nuances (qtd. in Kumawat and Anjana 31).

However, we as readers of translated texts do not raise this question of exactness of equivalence and *auchitya* of being right and wrong when we read Greek, French, German, Russian literatures in English, but the moment we read translated texts of

Indian authors we make hue and cry. Now it is high time to give up prejudices and accept translations of Indian authors for the co-existence of other cultures and languages.

Strategy/Approach

Whatever strategy/approach we as translators adopt to translate literary texts, when it comes to regional/anchalik literature which is laden with linguistic and cultural peculiarities as in the case of Maithili literature, it opens up new challenges for translators at every step. While translating culturally loaded texts, we should keep cultural terms as they are as much as possible and try to provide footnote or endnote or glossary so that meanings will get explained. This kind of practice will give us the local cultural flavours and fragrance and it will maintain the promises (loyalty, readability). This strategy will also enrich local/regional language and gradually such words would occupy space in dictionaries. For instance, the term “paag” has been very popular and has been included in the dictionary. Translator’s approach/strategy should depend on the target readers. If the target reader/community is foreigners then the first attempt should be to find equivalent terms in target language as much as possible and after that ‘sense for sense’ translation should be rendered. If the target reader/community is Indian then translators should keep the cultural terms intact and provide note/footnote/endnote/glossary for the detailed information so that cultural diversity may be shared and celebrated which may promote amity and unity. As Bassnett points out that “the translator must take the SL text in such a way that the TL version will correspond to the SL version. . . To attempt to impose the value system of the source culture on to the TL culture is dangerous ground” (1991: 23). To solve such thorny issues, as translators, we should emphasize on developing various new prospects, perspectives and propriety that should be both creative and critical in its approach rather than looking for the issues of being ‘right or wrong’ in the practice of literary translation. Prof. Avadhesh Kumar Singh, addresses this issue of appropriateness in this way:

Propriety of translational act demands that translator should put the source-author’s views in proper perspective to do justice to the source texts dealing with the ultra-sensitive issues like religion, language and culture (1965: xv).

Venuti suggests the strategies for the translators engaged in the translation of literary texts. He argues that translator should adopt and practise the approach of

‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’ while translating literary texts. The term ‘foreignization’ refers to “keeping cultural specific expressions intact in the TL texts” (Mannikar 67) whereas the concept ‘domestication’ “emphasizes on naturalizing and neutralizing the cultural specific expressions in the SL text by replacing them with the expressions of target language cultural terminologies” (Mannikar 67).

Conclusion

A tradition of translation should be developed so that we may provide global platform to local/ regional literatures. English Translation of Maithili literature will create the space and the scope for serious and in-depth research, interdisciplinary research and comparative research. Kriti Kapur states that

India’s multilingualism and multiculturalism ethos can be celebrated in the real sense of the word by understanding and accepting its diverse literatures and this is being done through translation. Thus, cultural dialoguing through translation will facilitate nation building and preservation of cultural diversity (2014: 55).

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Psychological Undercurrents in Parent-Child Relationship in African Literature

*Akanegbu Chikamnene Onyinye**

Abstract

Psychoanalysis is said to be one of the most controversial but fascinating and rewarding approaches in appreciating literature. This approach has become one of the mechanisms to find out the hidden meaning of a literary text. The focus is usually on the unconscious or subconscious rather than on the conscious mind. It is hinged on the foundational perspective that a person's behaviour is determined by experiences from the past that are placed in the unconscious mind as propounded by Freud. This study examines how three selected African texts portray the relationship that exists between parents and their children, which is usually conflictual as a result of their different ideologies to life. The study further looks at forms in which these conflicts occur and the psychological implications it has on both parties. The research will be descriptive and qualitative, exploring, analyzing and explaining certain behavioural traits and outbursts in characters in the purposefully selected literary texts, using the psychoanalytical theory.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, parenting, laxity, conflict and ideology

Introduction

Psychoanalysis helps us to understand culture, philosophy, religion and most importantly literature; it is not simply a branch of medicine. Freud started his psychoanalytic work in the 1800s while trying to treat behavioural disorders in patients. He organized these events into developmental stages involving relationships with parents and drives of desire and pleasure. These stages deal with base levels of desire, but they also involve fear of loss, loss of affection from parents and repression.

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To keep conflict buried in the unconscious, Freud argues that defenses are developed: selective memory, selective perception, denial, displacement, projection, regression, fear of intimacy and fear of death. He maintained that our desires and unconscious conflicts give rise to three areas of the mind; the Id; the location of drives also known as libido, Ego, which is one of the major defenses against the power of the drives and Superego, which is the area of the unconscious that houses judgement which wrestle for dominance as we grow from infancy, childhood to adulthood.

That the family crucially affects the self is a commonplace social scientific assumption not limited to psychoanalysis. Baumrind's (1966, 1975, 1991 & 2013) research into authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles illustrates how developmental psychologists have sought to clarify the tie between parenting and the traits of children. During the first years of life parents assume special importance in the lives of their children. They guide their young children from complete infantile dependence into the beginning stages of autonomy. This process is called parental socialization and socialization refers to the process of inheriting norms, customs, values, and ideologies. Parents' styles of care giving can have both immediate and lasting effects on children's social functioning in areas of moral development, to peer play, to academic achievement (Bornstein 2007: 16). Interpersonal relationship has exceptional developmental implications for humans everywhere, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and geographic boundaries (Duck 1994: 90). For children, parent-child relation is important. Parenting represents both a universal, if not taken for granted, feature of everyday family life and individual autobiographical experience; it also varies markedly across different cultural, social, and historical contexts. Implicated in process of psychological development and intergenerational influence, parenting is fundamental to human survival as well as to processes of cultural transmission and change. This research deals with the quality of parent-child interactions that relates to parental acceptance-rejection theory. Parental acceptance theory is a theory of socialization that attempts to predict and explain world-wide causes and other correlates of parental acceptance-rejection. Additionally, the theory attempts to predict and explain the consequences of acceptance and rejection in other primary interpersonal relationships, including intimate adult relationship. In particular, personality postulates that rejected children are likely to feel anxious and insecure which can also lead to hostility, aggression, passive aggression or problems with the management of hostility and aggression, dependence or defensive independence, impaired self-esteem, impaired self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness emotional instability and negative world view.

Parent-Child Relationship

The structure and quality of relationships between family members are fundamental elements of family functioning and a major influence on the well-being of parents and children. The introduction of the world comes through a primary group: the family; it is the institution wherein one has most contact and the one from which one traditionally receives the most emotional support. We depend on family for our early nurturance and socialization. Societies depend on families to carry out certain vital functions, such as socialization of the young and regulation of sexual activities. Family relationships between wife and husband, parents and children, brothers and sisters or more distant relatives can be warm and fulfilling but they equally can be full of the most extreme tension, driving its members to despair and imbuing them with a deep sense of anxiety and guilt. Individuals need relationships in which their identity can continue to develop; they need privacy, flexible roles, especially that which incorporate individual change.

Communication has been discovered as an essential tool in relationships. In a society, for instance Africa, relationships are not taken for granted. As human beings, we have individual differences and usually like it to be respected. In this respect, anyone involved in a particular relationship who tries to impose his ideas or opinions on the other may not be helping their relationship. The ability of one to satisfy the other's needs goes a long way in strengthening their relationship, but in a situation whereby these needs cannot be met, it is seen as maltreatment of the person directly involved. The neglect of needs in a relationship does a lot of harm to that relationship. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) present a unique spin on parent-child relationship. In *Beloved*, the novel's protagonist, Sethe, exceptionally complicates parent-child relationship: she never knew her mother well because she was separated from her early in life because of slavery which marred their relationship, in *The Kite Runner*, Amir has a very complex relationship with Baba, as much as Amir loves Baba, he rarely feels Baba loves him back. His desire to win Baba's love motivates him not to stop Hassan's rape.

Parental demands provoke rebelliousness especially due to parent's pressure, rather than being cowed. There is a conflict between the old as constituted by James in Graft's *Sons & Daughters* (1964) and the young as represented by Aaron and Maanan. The children deal on choosing career for a living and choosing career for its passion. With the erroneous assumption that his children were not yet capable of making wise decisions about their future careers, James insists in doing it for them as he successfully did for his first two sons. "... he actually believes that he

chose their professions for them. ...we the two youngest of his children, who must just fit in with his plans and obey his every command- we dare to find fault with his choice, we disobey him (9). Aaron sees himself as unlucky for being part of the Ofosu's family, but concludes that the best way to survive is to fight back, similarly Maanan's love for dancing is rejected by her father which makes her constantly unhappy and "...fed up of life" (Habila 10). She is not only tired of life but loses her morals and respect when she unguardedly speaks to her eldest brother George about being the cause of making their father feel so swell and important because he is a medical doctor which is a respectable profession.

Laxity has also been proven to be instrumental to a slack in parent-child relationship, and it typically involves a failure on the requisite party to provide the basic needs of food, care, shelter, protection, supervision and love; laxity could be physical, verbal or emotional. Parenting is an important obligation not only for parents but the entire society at large. With the high rate of crime, delinquency, poverty and all sorts of oddities in the society, occasioned by Western influences like ICT, films, television, internet viewing and other socialization agencies, there is dire need for parents to contribute meaningfully to the physical, health, academic, moral, spiritual as well as psychological development of children. Children need proper guidance and counseling from their parents. In Habila's *Measuring Time* (2007) Lamang, the father of the twin Mamo and LaMamo exemplifies neglectful parenting. Lamang's wife had died as the twin came into the world. Lamang, busy with business and philandering, gives the boy first to his brother's wife's aunty Marina who parented them until they were three years old. One day, he unceremoniously takes the twins dumping them on his sister's aunty Marina, who becomes their surrogate mother. Lamang is a distant father who is more interested in chasing women and a political career than being a father.

The boys grow to love and respect aunty Marina because of the physical, emotional and health care she gives them, especially to Mamo, who suffers from sickle-cell, the distance between them and their father grows wider, hence their desire to run always from home. Lamang spends about a week at home every month and whenever he comes back he looks at his children in astonishment. As if remembering suddenly that he had two sons. He struggles to remember their names and when he does remember, he always mixes them up, even though they are not identical. Although Lamang has limited time for his children, he has a soft spot for LaMamo thus he always has friction with Mamo. When Mamo tells his father that he wants to travel with his brother to Timbuktu, Lamang attempts a small, carefree laugh then

he says angrily and sarcastically thus, “you are lucky you didn’t go far with your weak and useless body” ... (Habila 57). He angrily recounts the consequences of his leaving the house and goes ahead to ask “Is there anything I haven’t provided for you and your brother?” Mamo on the other hand felt like saying “we have everything...except your love” (Habila 58). With the knowledge of his favorite son LaMamo being in a distant land alone, he blames Mamo for his disappearance, insisting that nothing happens to him, because on the rare occasions when Lamang has decided to notice his children, it is LaMamo, he notices and has sometimes bragged to his friends about the striking resemblance between them. In the only family picture in the house which was taken when the twins were five years old, Lamang holds LaMamo on his lap while Mamo’s face is a speck over his mother’s shoulder.

Very early in life, Mamo has learned to keep his sick and awkward body in the background. He has learned to observe from the sidelines. He often thinks of himself as the real silent listener to every conversation. The relationship between Lamang and Mamo is very distressing. Mamo, while in the University, has studied for two years and in those years he returns home only when he needs money for his routine drugs. Even during the breaks when other students eagerly leave for their homes with their parents who come from all parts of the country to pick them up, he hangs out with idlers who have turned the school hostels into their homes. His new environment is acting like some kind of therapy and he does not fall ill. Mamo fantasizes in his moments of dejection that Iliya is his real father and Lamang is his uncle, because for the first three years of his life, it is Iliya that he and his brother have called father. Mamo, in his depression and loneliness, makes the sun, moon and stars his companion, thereby making him reflect on the friction and the extent of hatred his father has for him as a result of his health. His father’s voice comes clearly to him “...his brother is my spitting image, taller, strong. “He is right now in the army, abroad, a fine young man, not like his brother too weak...” (Habila 7). In the real sense, Mamo is actually taller when he tells his father thus “he is five-nine, and I am five-eleven” (78). Lamang, willing and eager to pull him down in the presence of his friends, says “but you walk your shoulder bowed, you must learn to walk straight and think positive” (78). Lamang is not concerned about the health or safety of Mamo. Lamang, therefore, fails “to act or affirm and tighten by cultural invention his unsatisfactory loose mammalian connection with his children” (Dinnerstein 1990: 80).

Mamo makes an impact when Pastor Mela helps in show-casing his essay, yet Lamang is uninterested. He merely flips through the pages and drops the book “I’ll look at it later- I am in a hurry right now” (Habila 160). There is no word of encouragement for his son. Uncle Iliya, Lamang’s brother encourages Mamo’s writing career, while the editor steers Mamo from straight history to biography, encouraging him to model his writing on Plutarch’s parallel lives.

Mamo’s writing elevates not only his family but the entire Keti community. He is given an office in the Mai’s palace as well as in a guest house where all sorts of immorality reign. He soon learns about the corruption including sexual immorality, deceit and betrayal of Keti leaders. The novel, among other things, examines the age-old theme of generational conflict, in this instance, between parents and their children. For instance, there is no love lost between Asabar and Uncle Iliya, his father. Asabar, who briefly departs the village to seek fame and fortune, returns disillusioned, becoming a miscreant, a plaything in the hand of politicians, especially his uncle Lamang. Asabar indulges in smoking weed, and we are told that he finds very early in life “the pleasures of alcohol” (50). And, because of this, he cannot get along with his Spartan-like father, an ex-soldier and proprietor of a school.

For her part, Zara seems to have come to grief in the novel on account of the frosty relationship with her mother. She gets into a loveless, rancorous marriage in order to please her mother who seems to blindly support custom and tradition even in the face of injustice and abuse meted out to her daughter by her irresponsible husband. What is worse, as Zara battles the ensuing emotional and legal crises caused by her failed marriage, her mother does not appear to be terribly bothered, so long as her other daughter, Rhoda, is doing well in her own marriage. It is this absence of maternal support and understanding which plays a major role in the emergence of Zara’s mental breakdown. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Zara will not talk to her mother when her crises come to a head, preferring instead of thinking of writing and eventually send her diary to Mamo. The breakdown of the family or the disappearance of family values of parental love, support, care and warmth seem to be the root of the myriad of social pathologies afflicting contemporary society. It is interesting to note that Helon Habila uses the Lamang family as a template to mirror the unsavory state of the family as a social unit in the contemporary world. It is also ace worthy that there is no ideal family being depicted as a model when these other anomalies are judged. Apart from the issues of laxity, generational gap also brings about friction in parent-child relationship. In *Our Children are Coming* (1990) by Chukwuemeka Ike (1990) parents and their children are not in agreement on the

issue of leadership at the home front as well as in the societal level. There is unrest in the society as students organize demonstrations and riots against the government policies that are detrimental to their welfare. This is why the government in power sets up the presidential commission for juveniles below twenty years. This commission probes that the youth have no adolescent representation and this sparks off a bloodless revolution in the country championed by the youth. The legitimate demands of the youth under the umbrella of National Association of Students for representation in the five-man commission serve as a valve that opens their bottled feeling on the adult leadership of the country. The youths expose the moral and economic bankruptcy which the economy has been suffering under both civilian and military leadership. The subject of bad leadership has been one of the focal point in post-independent Africa and this is the issue also raised in *Our Children are Coming*. The implication is that people who are grossly incompetent in certain spheres of government life are appointed to make recommendations on them. Hence, such people as Alhaji Adamu and the promiscuous Chief Mrs. Edo as members of the presidential commission of inquiry, instead of brainstorming on how best to improve the lot of the nation's youth, these committee members are occupied with the thought of the commission's all-expense paid for overseas tour. The challenges of unnecessary national waste are also highlighted. The chauffeur-driven air conditioned cars allocated to every member of the commission for the duration of enquiry, the commission's all expense of global tour and the commission's members' numerous allowances cause the nation a staggering amount of money which could be channelled to other venture that will add value to the lives of the teeming population of needy citizens in the nation: "...in which thousands of graduates roam the streets jobless in which teachers are irregularly paid when paid at all and lack of funds has led to the postponement of crucial and overdue reforms" (Ike 1990: 287).

For a lasting solution to these challenges in both the family institution and the nation at large, parents should look more honestly and critically at their own lives before passing judgement on their children. It is the failure to do so that estranges them from their children. The case of the first witness before the students' commission is a typical example. She is a Mullato and she suffers because of her father's moral misconduct. When she was barely one-year-old, her father made away with her to London, leaving her poor American mother who had earlier assisted him financially.

Family relationships in African Post-Colonial societies manifest a growing level of tension, conflict and stress as a result of new opportunities, new interest and new

dilemma created by increasing gender and class stratification across Africa but especially across generations of Africans. This tension between generations and between opposing systems is played out in the conflict between mothers and daughters. The relationship between Madam Agnes and her daughter in Nwoye's *Fetters and Choices* (2003) is lop-sided, while Madam Agnes adores her youngest daughter Itohan for being a tool in her hand and detests her daughter Blessing, who she sees as a weakling like her father for refusing to accept her offer of going to Italy like her peers to fend for the family. In the struggle for survival and success, Madam Agnes complicity is shown in neo-colonial forms of exploitation, hence Blessing sees her mother as being complicit with inherent and neo-colonial system, thus the quest for money is shown to deeply affect the relationship between mother and daughter.

The analysis of Habila's *Measuring Time*, Ike's *Our Children are Coming*, and Nwoye's *Fetters and Choices* reveal that conflict between parents and their children is a natural phenomenon since most conflicts are based on real differences and occur in different forms. The conflict that ensued between parents and their adolescent children in *Our Children are coming* is political in nature; while these parents accuse their children of delinquent acts, they are also found wanting in the political positions they occupy in the society, hence the purposeful exclusion of these adolescents in the presidential commission set to probe children below twenty one years. 002, the second witness in the commission for parents over twenty one says that his father whom he believes to be a man of integrity shatters his perception of him, when he uses government funds to pay the 'protocol officers' who are part of his entourage each time he travels within and outside the country. The youths watch helplessly as the country is being ruled as if it were a personal ranch. Methods of election into offices are marked with rigging and corrupt practices with dubious, bogus manifestoes. The last adolescent witness, 013 in the commission was more critical about the educational system, in his opinion, leaders of the country are hypocritical and selfish in their presumption that angels will come out of the poultry-ruins they have erected under the dignified names of secondary schools and universities. Another reason parents and their children are at logger heads is on the bases of parental ideology, parents have set of beliefs, values and opinions which they expect their children to act upon. One of the testifiers 005 testifies that her parents who wanted to be medical doctors in their youth but failed, had to manipulate her choice of course, and university, similarly in *Fetters and Choices*, Madam Agnes's opinion that girls, the age of her daughter Blessing were becoming bread

winners in their homes, with their travelling abroad which Blessing negates and insists on completing her education brought about conflict in their home. She craved to be as affluent as her neighbours whose daughters were in Italy and are taking good care of their families. Lamang's opinion of Mamo being a weakling as a result of his ill health results in antisocial activities perpetuated by the twins on their father. They would drop scorpions into his shoes or misplace his car keys; they also contemplated poison. Although Mamo felt a nagging sense of guilt whenever his father inquires the where about of LaMamo, he didn't want to put his father's mind at rest, he wanted to be the torturer for once and his father tortured so he refused to show him the letters LaMamo had sent.

Individuation as Psychotherapy

In Jungian psychology, individuation describes a process of self-realization- the discovery of one's purpose of life or what one believes to be the meaning of life. When individuals lose touch with certain aspects of their selves, they may be able to reintegrate these aspects of their nature through individuation. It contributes to the differentiation and form of the individual psyche. Those who do not experience difficulty with the ongoing process of individuation may find it easier to maintain mental and emotional well-being.

Mamo and LaMamo are full of mischief. They embody the youthful spirit of rebellion, restlessness, revenge and rage, driven as they are by some vague notion of knight-errantly and chivalry. Admirably, though, the twins tend to complement each other: LaMamo is strong, bold, courageous and extroverted while Mamo is anemic, shy, intelligent and introverted. And as they both follow the path nature has marked out for them, they confront petty rivalries and jealousies:

I guess I was. I was so jealous I never talked to him about you again. I felt so betrayed that day ... But I guess I've always been jealous of him he as everything I don't have. He is always the strong and healthy one, and when we were kids, adults would always pat him on the head and say, what a healthy strong boy; and when they turned to me the look on their faces would change. My fantasy is to have his body, with mind, and then I'll be the perfect person (Habila 2007:102).

This statement was made by Mamo to Zara, as her coming into their lives almost ruins the delicate relationship between the twins. Mamo's subsequent attempt to acquire University education, which eventually fails; thus his endeavours are all geared towards fulfilling his dream of measuring to his more physically equipped

twin brother. Even his conquest of Zara can in this light be interpreted as a form of victory over his brother. Thus Zara becomes a war trophy signifying Mamo's capabilities. Mamo also feels a tinge of jealousy when Asabar assumes the youth wing leader of Lamang's party the New Victory party. Mamo thinks "if things had been different between him and his father, he would have been the one standing there, with his father confiding in him" (153). The conflict that ensues between Mamo and his father Lamang makes him jealous but he assumes psychological maturation, thus overcomes it.

Similarly, in *Our Children are Coming*, the witness 001 in the National Association of Student Commission, is a Mullato, brought up with the deceit that her mother is dead. This childhood devoid of maternal love, makes her plan an early marriage in order to make a family of her own. Unfortunately, she falls in love with the son of her father's colleague and rival over a girlfriend. What follows is that these fathers use their children as mere "scapegoats for settling old, dishonourable scores which they all will not admit publicly" (Ike 20). Consequently, their fathers' immorality and selfishness drive these two young people into each other's arms which results in an unwanted pregnancy which culminates in the poor girl's estrangement from her father. It is evident that the psychological torture which they suffer is as a result of their fathers' moral misconduct. Through this witness, Ike draws our attention to the need to avoid bringing up children with lies and deceit. Another instance of deceit is expressed in the life of 002's father who is seen by the world and his children as a rigid, moralist and a disciplinarian; nothing in his actions suggests any illicit relationship with any woman but 002 is shocked to his bones when a student disappears and it is traced to his father. He does not get enough shock from a father who he previously adored and revered until he sees a charm like object in his room. This is devastating for 002 especially as he is about to take his final exams but "the pressure of my unhappy ancestry was so great that, without seeking advice from any quarter, I had to quit." (Ike 216). He does not only quit, he begins to hate his father and anything connected with him. He also begins to hate greatness if one would have to descend low to achieve it.

Unrestricted Unconscious Psyche

Id is the unconscious part of the psyche that operates solely to find pleasure through gratification of its instinctive needs to be restricted by the ego and balanced by the super ego; however, when the Id is unrestricted in an individual, the individual concerned has a personality that goes after his desire or need at whatever cost. It is

suggestive of a weak ego and an overwhelmed superego. This is Lamang's personality trait which causes conflict between him and his children. Lamang's quest for women of all shapes and sizes was a reputable personality he had in Ketu; the song, a ballad that grew in detail and complexity with each rendition in the moonlight village square, called Lamang the "King of women". The refrain described how women stood longingly on their doorsteps as he passed and how mothers locked up their daughters at night to save them from "the handsome ravisher which ended with the lines: "Mother sighing with longing, Daughter sighing with longing, Ah, king of women show some mercy" (Habila 2007: 1).

It is this story and song Mamo and LaMamo hear that they decide long time ago to make life hard for their father. Lamang is a distant part-time father, who is more interested in pursuing women and a political career than being a real father. Because the Id only gratifies instinctive needs, Lamang does not weigh the consequences of his action, both his superego which is his conscience which should keep him always from philandering and his ego which tries to find realistic ways to placate the passions of the Id and still within the moral boundaries set by the superego was absent in Lamang. First, when he takes the decision to get married to Tabitha, the boys' mother, yet he was in love and in a relationship with Saraya, his first love and secondly abandoning Mamo and LaMamo in the care of his brother and suddenly 'withdrawing them from their parents', hence the boys are bent on making him pay.

This is also the personality trait of Madam Agnes that makes her vulnerable to wealth. She is said to betray the institutionalized notion of maternal love and devotion as she allows her Id take over her desires to become rich like her neighbours. In her quest for affluence, she sells her last daughter to sex trafficking, putting the fifteen years old girl's life at risk of getting sexually transmitted disease like HIV/AIDS. She had gone ahead against all odds to contact a professional skilled in the art of foreign trips by selling off all her valuables including her wrappers to make sure the trip was a reality. Madam Agnes could not support her husband in providing food, shelter and his medical bills. She was more concerned about enriching herself and being affluent. We also see her Id in play in the novel, when she tenaciously held on to the gold jewelry which was given to her by Itohan at the detriment of her health: When she got home that evening, she spent a lot of time in thinking. She was determined to save those jewelries. So she decided to consult a native doctor first (Nwoye 2003: 87). Madam Agnes would not take the sale of the gold jewelries as an option to raise money for her 'favourite' daughter's ill health. Her greed to own it strongly overpowered her desire for adequate treatment for her daughter.

Emotional and Psychological Disintegration

Mamo and LaMamo are thrust upon an inhospitable and hostile world, like standard leastways at the mercy of surrogate parents. The severance of the ties between mother and children and, by extension, between father and sons symbolizes a form of alienation from nature and essence. The impression of the world gained by the twin brothers is that of existential xenophobia, comic ennui, despair, and meaningless misery. Theirs is a life apart, as sensitive driftwood afloat on the turbulent sea of life. As a consequence, an adversarial oppositionality builds up between the boys and society, embodied as it were by an authority figure, their father. Small wonder, then, that Mamo and LaMamo, young teenagers, are taken up with the idea of harming their father. Their career in kill-the-father neurosis spawns all that follows: “an unresolved Oedipal complex, resulting in mercenary soldiery for LaMamo, on one hand, and scholarship for Mamo, on the other (Anyokwu 2008: 7). The boredom, emotional weakness, the sense of shattering, alienation, loss and exile all we find in the characters of Mamo, LaMamo and Zara. On an occasion, Mamo, like other characters, is overwhelmed by a feeling of loneliness thus:

He waited for something, anything, to happen, and as he waited He measured time in the shadows cast by trees and walls, in the silence the next, in the seconds, and minutes and hours and days and weeks and months add up to form seasons (Habila 2007: 118).

Mamo’s emotional disintegration was further highlighted by his love for the news thus:

The radio and books sustained him at night. He’d lie in the dark and listen to the voices from faraway Lagos or London or America or Germany... There were also the late request programmes when insomniacs like him would phone in with their marital woes, their sexual angst, their clinical depressions, and their congenital diseases. As he listened to the people on the radio were seated beside him, together forming a community of misfits, freaks, and solitaires, desperately reaching out to touch flea, to form a cycle of empathy (Habila 2007: 119).

Time’s cruel action continues to dig Mamo’s heels as he frantically seeks ways and means of easing his loneliness: “he felt powerless, and trapped and almost desperate” (150). He is held hostage by time as he takes to desultory walks, a driftwood killing time. And, sometime, all he does is wait: “I am just waiting” (Habila 119). The question is, what is he waiting for? The answer comes in the next page: Nothing” (120)

Zara on the other hand comes to grief in the novel on account of the frosty relationship between her and her mother. She gets into a loveless, rancorous marriage in order to please her mother who seems to blindly support custom and tradition even in the face of injustice and abuse meted out to her daughter by her irresponsible husband. Zara battles the ensuing emotional and legal crises caused by her failed marriage, her mother does not appear to be terribly bothered, so long as her other daughter, Rhoda, is doing well in her own marriage. It is this absence of maternal support and understanding that plays a major role in the emergence of Zara's mental breakdown.

While Mamo and LaMamo, twin brothers yet different in their abilities and capabilities suffer emotional trauma as a result of loneliness brought by their father's negligence, Zara, a gifted and intelligent beautiful woman, starry-eyed and ambitious, and potentially revolutionary, is separated from her only son, later ends up an embodiment of loss as a result of the sour relationship with her mother.

In Nwoye's *Fetters and Choices*, Blessing battles with her inner man as she suffers rejection that leads to emotional trauma which forces her to get married to a fake and never do well, thereby forgetting her quest for education. She is rejected by her mother, who should provide her with maternal love, care and guidance. Blessing battles emotional trauma from her mother's rejection which leads to depression in her marriage to Ezekiel. She, in her husband's house, spends more time thinking about her travails in life. She thinks deeply about the strained relationship between her and her mother. She wishes she had listened to her mother by going to Italy. She is furious with herself and her naivety in dealing with Ezekiel. All she wishes for Ezekiel is death by her hand. Her emotional breakdown and bottled up pressure lead to her dysfunctional behaviour and thought of killing Ezekiel, her husband.

Conclusion

The research has explored various forms and bases for psychological outburst which have been identified to be jealousy, individuation, laxity, unrestricted desires and father's wound which play out in the lives of different characters from Mamo, LaMamo, Zara, Blessing and lots more who are victims of parental laxity. It has examined the human mind, emotional feelings, actions and behavioural patterns of these characters who in the midst of their depression sought ways to break loose from their different experiences. In the study I discussed the tripartite model of the psyche especially the Id which is the most insecure and obscure part of human personality. Its function is to fulfill the primordial life principle, which is the pleasure

principle as seen in the life of Lamang and Madam Agnes who are more concerned about personal interest than being responsible parents, thus, succeeding in bringing out the worst character in their children. The research recommends compromise, flexibility and effective communication as some internal mechanisms for improving parent-child relationship.

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A Black Feminist Consciousness in *Silver Sparrow* and *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones

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Abstract

There have been a plethora of federal government programmes, Civil Rights movements, and education programs that have had a positive impact on the dire condition of African- American women, but they still fall victims to the trifold oppressions of race, class, and gender. The Black feminist consciousness vehemently called for Black women's liberation from these subjugations. Black women today enjoy a more rewarding benefit than ever has been, engaging in permanent and established positions. This paper examines the application of the various concepts of Black feminism to the select fictional works of Tayari Jones viz., *Silver Sparrow* and *An American Marriage*. First published in 2011 and 2018 respectively, both are coming-of-age narratives that provide various forms and practices in relation to wider socio-economic developments of African-Americans in America.

Keywords: African-American women, trifold oppressions, Black feminism, Tayari Jones

Introduction

A Black feminist criticism refers to a body of critical and creative work written by Black women in the United States. A lot of the federal government programs, Civil Rights movements, and education programs have had a positive impact on the Black women's situation, but they still fall victims to the tri-dimensional factors of race, class, and gender subjugation. This led to the emergence of the Black feminist consciousness. In general, Black women enjoy a more rewarding benefit than ever

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has been, engaging in permanent and established positions. This paper looks at the application of Black feminists' concepts of ideology to the select works of Tayari Jones.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Jones is a prolific African-American writer, who is best known for her novels. Jones spent most of her childhood in Southwest Atlanta, and so her stories and literary imagination also find centre stage in Atlanta. Jones wrote at a time when situations were ameliorating for coloured women in general, with all the advancements and movements of yesteryears. She provides a Black woman's point of view by presenting female-centric narratives, in which women characters are coming-of-age. Their journey however has not been unproblematic.

Black Feminism is a philosophy that calls for Black women's liberation from the trifold oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism. Contemporary Black feminist criticism was encouraged by the Civil Rights Movement, and expanded in juxtaposition with the Second Wave of feminism and the Black Power and Black Arts movements, which clearly were dominated by White women and Black men respectively. The movement rose in the United States as a result of White supremacy and patriarchal dominance on enslaved Black women, and attained a wider audience in the 2010s with the growing force of social media. Black feminists vehemently argued that gender and racial divisions abate the potency of the mainstream feminist and anti-racist movements.

Throughout history, mainstream feminism was negligible to the issue of race, considering it to be less important to patriarchy. Black feminists have therefore vigorously fought to challenge this ignorance of racism. Moraga and Anzaldúa strongly attack this disregard of White women arguing that racism certainly has an effect on people's lives, except the "white women who can "afford" to remain oblivious to these effects" (162). If we look at some of the groundbreaking feminists that led to the expansion of Black feminist criticism, we see that Audre Lorde, Sojourner Truth, Barbara Christian, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, and Patricia Hill Collins have played a significant role in the expansion of the field in different ways.

Both the select narratives provide various forms and practices in relation to wider socio-economic developments of African-American women in America. As Jones' third novel *Silver Sparrow* expands upon the subject of love and marriage, it also touches upon the everyday challenges faced by women inside and outside of home such as infidelity, class differences among partners, and bigger issues such as bigamy. Published in 2011, the story revolves around a father's life that is filled with

massive lies, and the chaotic consequences that his two wives and two teenage girls are swept up in. Following the wrongful imprisonment of a young Black man and its impact on him and on his families, *An American Marriage* published in 2018, then, explores the close association of the personal and the public by placing the intimate details of the lives of the characters within the larger social and political forces in contemporary America. Although it is structured as an intersection of culture, race, class, and gender, the novel also closely examines the inescapable niceties of family, as well as exercising one's choice.

Experience of Generational Adversities by African American Women

Gender roles hold an important position in Jones' writings, alongside race and class. Jones clarifies the notion that people have about African-American culture as matriarchal, owing to the immense responsibility that women take on. She says that women take on responsibility only in the absence of men, that "In the black culture here in the US, we have a crisis of masculinity" (Conroy, Web). A lot of their men have either been incarcerated or dead at a young age, leaving the women with no choice but to take up the men's role as the head of the family. And this is exactly what happens in the narratives.

Patriarchy is one of the characteristic writings of feminism and is also a major concern in Jones' fiction, wherein she vigorously fights against male dominators. "Traditionally, patriarchy granted the father nearly total ownership over wife or wives and children" and "Classically, as head of the family the father is both begetter and owner in a system in which kinship is property" (Millet 67). The view of patriarchy over the years has undergone a huge transformation in many parts of the world nevertheless we see that it is still shaped by the underlying idea of men above women. As Adichie has remarked, "If we do something over and over again, it becomes normal. If we see the same thing over and over again, it becomes normal" (*We Should* 13). Likewise, if we keep seeing only men as the primal head of everything, it starts to seem natural to accept the women as the 'Other,' the 'Second Sex.' The gender roles defined in the narratives adhere to this point, revealing the limited choice of women.

The entire plot of *Silver Sparrow* is shaped by the secret life of the bigamist James Witherspoon, who has two families in Atlanta, the public and the private. James demands the secret family to live by his sayings, compelling them to live in the shadows of his main family. The women characters here manage their lives

around James, struggling to come to terms to his wills. James even had to keep her secret child, Dana, away from her hopes and dreams in fear of being exposed to his dual life. She and her mother Gwendolyn are thus marginalized. And because everyone wants to be in his favour, the daughters want him as a father and the women want to occupy the position of the wife, James is able to get away. He knows that his wife Laverne was not going to give up her marriage and Gwen was determined to stay too after all the scandalous circumstances, such as bearing a child and being disowned by her father for leaving her husband, Clarence Yarboro, for James. Jones thus presents a vivid portrayal of life and sexual awakening in Atlanta, Georgia, in the 1980s as experienced by the teenage sisters, and in the 1950s, when the shame of being unmarried and pregnant shaped their own mothers' lives, while also uncovering the transformed condition in contemporary times.

Laverne was impregnated at an early age and was practically forced into child marriage as she was only fifteen years old when she got married to James. Although James too was of the same age, he was willing to marry unlike Laverne. When she lost her first child, she no longer wants to go back home but stays with James and his mother, more because she had no choice in a judging society. When James' dual lives are gradually exposed, Laverne begins to question her worth. Chaurisse, herself being angry and broken, would ask her mother to stop droning and stand up for herself. "Mama," "Grab a broom. Put sugar in his gas tank. Something" "I just want you to be more ..." (313). All these highlight the very little choices that were laid down for women around that time.

The things that happen in the story take place because Black women were forced to work as domestic labourers. Throughout history, Black women had been the most browbeaten members of the American society as she has been the object of continual exploitation. Although some White women spoke of sexual equality, on the whole they had no intentions of working together with Black women. The relations of race and sex thus exacted a heavy toll on the Black woman. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, no Black woman held a job beyond that of menial job. Laverne's mother Mattie, James' mother Miss Bunny, and Raleigh's mother Lula, worked long hours for White families. Theirs was still a generation that worked tedious jobs under White folks. Both Bunny and Lula were only fifteen years old when they were house-cleaning for the Whites. And even though it was the year 1942, far afield from slavery, Lula felt like she was living on a plantation. The systematic exclusion of Black women from other privileged areas of service continued to dominate their lives. And so while freedom opened new paths for

Black men, most women were confined to old problems that were only exacerbating with time.

When Miss Bunny told Lula about the vacancy of an overnight girl needed by a new White family, her utmost concern was, “What’s the husband like?” “I can’t go through this all again” and here we see how Black women’s bodies were still commodified by White men (120). Although a redbone girl herself, Lula did not want her son because his face reminded her of her White owner who raped her. Female harassment is not new when it comes to predicaments faced by women. This is justified when Dana “could hear [her] own voice, shrill with lies” as she explains to James about Marcus that “He doesn’t have a temper. He has never raised his hand to me” (107). To this day, for most Black women it is still a struggle against racism and sexism.

Just as that addressed by Black feminists, Tayari Jones too reveals the many challenges faced by women of colour and the issues that remain prevalent, while also unfailingly addressing the gallant ways in which Black women defy stereotypical gender roles. Jones structures her fiction as a feminist narrative around the oppression of Black men in the United States. The preference of a male child is made obvious in the narratives. Although Ronalda tells people that her mother was dead, she is still alive and had escaped with her little brother whom she loved a lot. Dana knew that her father too always wanted a son. Growing up with two brothers, Jones always felt that her parents had greater expectations of them. She says, “As anyone who’s ever had a brother knows, boys are in many ways the centre of the familial universe” (Conroy, Web). Jones confronts that although she had a happy childhood, she grew up in an environment where girl children were not celebrated and valued in the same way as boys.

White supremacy and male primacy has been a painted reality in the life of a Black woman. Whether young or old, the Black woman was basically left on her own. She was exploited, commodified, and deceived. From the letters she writes to Roy, we come to know that Celestial spent a year at Howard University before Spelman, wherein she met a forty-years-old married Black teacher, Raul Gomez, with whom she was pregnant at just eighteen. Although she had a share of being immoral, with all the false promises made to her by the older man left her envisioning with hope for a future with him. However, after twelve years of marriage, Gomez was not in a state to divorce his wife which brutally shattered Celestial. She had a weight pressing on her mental health that she dolled her way out. Although the sock dolls, which was introduced to her by her aunt Sylvia, was to donate to Grady

Hospital initially, every time she made something to comfort a motherless infant, Celestial felt like she was paying back for the abortion she had and the mistakes she had made. In writing an up-close look at marriage, race, and feminism in *An American Marriage*, Jones sees that society desires their daughters to be ladies “because it’s much more important that your daughter be a lady than your son be a gentleman” (Conroy, Web). Roy’s observation of women as men’s cure, for instance, is problematic. He believes that at times the only obsession that can cure a man is the inside of a woman, crediting Davina, the woman he sleeps with right after his release from prison, for showing him how to be himself again. This examination of Roy can be generalized in the way women are sexualized.

Jones has voiced out with regard to gender prejudices in various forms. In the art school that Celestial studied, she was one of the two Black students, in which the other was a guy, who was always angry at Celestial for spoiling his uniqueness. This calls attention to Yaa Gyasi’s *Transcendent Kingdom* where Gifty did not want to be thought of as “a woman in science” or “a black woman in science” but rather as “a scientist” (83). Gifty had tyrannical and misogynistic men like Yao in her small study group who would shut down any of the ideas proposed by women. They are products of a culture that has cultured them with the hidebound notion that men are central to women. Misogynoir comes in various forms and these are fine examples. It is in the ways in which Black women’s bodies were commodified, or in the police violence against Black women as is the case with the murder of Breonna Taylor, or in the ways in which a school resource officer knocked Taylor Bracey unconscious in a high school, Florida, on January 2021, or the perception that Black women are threatening and aggressive when they speak up for themselves. Today, we live in a world that is much evolved but our thoughts on gender have not evolved much. Because humans are communal beings, we incorporate and unconsciously assimilate ideas from our society.

People have always carried the notion that Black women are wild and uncontrollable. Al Green’s story in *Silver Sparrow*, about what a wife does when she finds out that her husband is being unfaithful, suggests how even their violence was taken as a joke. The wife, a Black woman, throws grit on her husband, Al Green, who gets a third degree burn from it. She then goes on to kill herself and Al Green later finds the Lord out of this mess. Jones uses this tragic story which she has been hearing all her life and weaves in to the narrative to debunk the notion of uncontrollable rage of Black women. There are other recent examples where Black women are stereotypically represented as aggressive and threatening. We see

Misogynoir pervading in women's sport media too. The unfair treatment imposed on Serena Williams during her Women's Singles finals match of the 2018 US Open by chair umpire Carlos Ramos represent a classic case. Apart from the warning given to Williams for damaging her tennis racket, the other two penalties for coaching and verbal abuse spurred controversies. Many male players like James Blake and John McEnroe have made use of much vulgar words than a "thief" against chair umpires but have been left unpenalized. This contrast treatment of Ramos between men and a Black woman is apparent of the biasness within the game of tennis. As a result of the intersection of multiple forms of oppression in the lives of Black women, they are made to feel like an outsider in all areas.

The angry Black woman thus remains a social, political, and cultural typecast that has been used to defame artists, athletes, and political figures. Former US President Donald Trump has a record of reinforcing old stereotypes on different occasions, ranging from calling Kamala Harris, the first Black woman to be elected as Vice President, as extraordinarily nasty and angry to calling a Black American woman journalist as threatening. Even former First Lady of the US Michelle Obama, in her book *Becoming* and in her several interviews, described her bewilderment on being called an angry Black woman.

These are proof enough of the systemic ways in which violence is maintained and justified as a result of hatred towards Black women. There are also other forms of structural violence in which Black women are systematically disregarded in the everyday life such as marriage, which often are brushed under the carpet with the big constitutional systems such as police violence taking all the highlights. People barely ever talk about the women who are taking care of the house and families when their husbands are incarcerated. And so it is imperative to be expansive when addressing about violence, which is exactly what Jones does in her latest novel.

Roy is a young, middle-class Black man who falls prey to the codified racism of the American criminal justice system. Making use of a single family, *An American Marriage* centres on the consequences of a cataclysmic injustice on Roy and Celestial who have been married only for eighteen months. It delves deep into the subjects of class, incarceration, love, family and marriage, with the persistent racism of the justice system at its backdrop. These subjects work beautifully in this delicate story with a bigger message about the blatant inequity in American society. While the novel accounts the physical and psychological torments of the male protagonist, it also throws ample light on the psyche of his wife Celestial. Because, even though

Roy fights against the penal system from the inside, Celestial must fight her own battles on the outside.

Jones sought to look at the collateral effects of incarceration, and the way society looks at women's roles in these relations. Women are the caretakers of the incarcerated men. But people converse very little about what is being sacrificed by these women. This can be because of the poor idea that women are defined by their relationships to men. Roy's incarceration forces Celestial into a forlorn state as her world is upturned overnight. Aside from being separated from her husband, Celestial who at one point longed to have a child with Roy, considers it pointless given their situation and decides to have an abortion. Celestial could not even bring herself to seal the flaps on the sturdy cardboard box, which contained her hand-made dolls for sell, as the memory of ripping tape troubled her. When memory gets the better of her and cannot hold back her tears irrespective of the place and time she is in, Celestial would blame it on allergies or an eyelash irritation.

Celestial was mentally tired of all that was happening in her life. Her dad was still writing checks to pay for her wedding, when their marriage has been in a pathetic condition. She worked crazy hours at the shop, and then drove for hours to Louisiana to spend the night with her in-laws, who were not even fond of her. Her husband was not at fault, but there was only so much she could do as a Black woman. She tells Andre, "You don't know what it's like to be standing in the line to get in to see him" in the prison, "it's different for women. They treat you like you're coming to visit your pimp... Like you're a delusional victim" (157). It breaks Celestial to know that "Women's work is never easy, never clean" (285). There were times when she would look in the mirror and cannot quite recognize herself.

Redefining History and Borders by African American Women

It is not recent to see Black women redefining history and borders of gender roles. Since the time of slavery, Black women like Harriet Tubman, who led slaves through sticky situations to freedom, have always been voicing out their aspirations. Today, there is a rich history of Black women taking charge in various fields and activities, with women such as Oprah Winfrey, the first Black woman multi-billionaire and the greatest Black philanthropist in American history, Michelle Obama, the first African American woman to serve as the First Lady of the United States, Beyoncé Knowles, one of the world's best-selling recording artists, and Serena Williams, one of the greatest female tennis players that the world has seen.

Many women today are expressive who like to explore and experience with everything and do not shy away from opportunities. As Ytasha Womack says, "It's what our predecessors fought for. It's called choice" (162). Black women now emphasize more on self-expression and being themselves, a trait which was uncalled for in the past as they were demanded to be strong. They overcame situations beyond their power, and sacrifice for the family and children. In the analysis of Jones' female characters, crucial questions of self and subjectivity come into sight. They find the need to deconstruct the post-Second World War ideology of woman as submissive wife, mother, and homemaker.

Celestial is in many ways a modern version of the characters in the preceding women-authored texts such as Toni Morrison, who defy social construct rules in her own way. This finds evidence in the way she thinks, acts, loves, and exerts power. She wants to live the life she wants and not the one that has been laid down by her husband or the society. Roy needs Celestial to come to see him in prison, to put money on his books, to keep their lawyer on his toes, to remind him of the man he once was. He tells her, "I feel like I need and need and need and it's wearing a hole in the fabric" (81). Roy needs her but Celestial needs herself too. Roy writes to Celestial in one of his letters saying, "I'm innocent" and she writes back, "I'm innocent, too" (84). This sums up the novel's main concept that we can be compassionate towards the victim, and make his voice heard, but not at the expense of having to represent his wife's needs and ambitions as trivial.

Being married to an incarcerated man is a major sacrifice. Yet, Celestial does extremely well in balancing her personal and professional life. When Roy had a false impression concerning Celestial's answer at her interview on the subject of her inspiration in making dolls, she makes him know that it was a special occasion for her. "Maybe it was selfish, but I wanted to have my moment to be an artist, not the prisoner's wife" (67). Although Roy felt that his wife was ashamed to tell them that he was in prison, Celestial was aware that her possibility for improvement in her profession will be greatly weakened by having her product associated with penal complexity, by mentioning about her husband's imprisonment. As a Black woman, Celestial had to make the White folks believe that she is an excellent doll maker and there was no room for errors.

Homer's *The Odyssey* had a huge inspiration on Jones' *An American Marriage*. Initially, Roy fell in love with Celestial's independence, someone that he cannot control. However, after his arrest he wanted a more traditional version of his wife.

She was expected the same as what Odysseus wanted from Penelope, submission. "Roy is like Odysseus" with "this huge challenge" and "he wants to find a clean home and a faithful wife waiting on him at the other end" Jones remarks (Bates, Web). But things have changed, and Celestial is no Penelope. These two women characters are a perfect quintessence of the transformation in gender roles over the years. Celestial is a modern woman who cannot just sit idly and wait for her man while she personally has a lot on her shoulder. She understands that she is not in the same distress as her husband nonetheless she too is in great pain and feels that she cannot continue to live this way. No one knows how long will Roy be behind bars, or whether he will ever be exonerated. As Gloria tells her, "You always run toward what you want... brilliant but impulsive and a tiny bit selfish" "But more women should be selfish" "Or else the world will trample you" (211). Celestial has endured so much to be married without actually being a wife for so long that she finally decides on leaving Roy. She was not abandoning him in his distress, as she will be there for him in ways she could render such as in continuing to keep his commissary up to date and visiting him as his friend, but she could no longer go on to be his wife. When Roy goes to meet his wife for the first time after his release from prison, Roy could see that Celestial had made her choice.

Celestial is not the only woman who possesses heroic traits, who could voice out and exercise her choices. The female characters in *Silver Sparrow* are also unapologetically themselves. This is Jones' literary and political account of gender mobility. From a very young age, Dana is apparent to be a bold little girl, from the way she stands her ground, the way she protests when she wants to know certain things or get things, or the way she fearlessly confronts Chaurisse and her mom. She is someone who delights in the thrill of taking risks. When she comes to know that James and Raleigh are throwing a party for Laverne for all the hard work she does, she sat up from the shampoo bowl at the parlour and fights for her mother saying, "My mother works hard," "but she never had a party or anything close to it. Do you know that?" (253). Despite the warning from her father, Dana tracks Chaurisse down and with time, the girls befriend each other. They grow into beautiful women with dreams and ambitions.

The emerging of working-class women was one of the revolutionary vanguards in history. We find women having different ambitions in the narrative. This is a solid way of breaking stereotypical representations of women to be fixed only to breeding and taking care of the household. Ronald was not worried about college applications. She had always had the desire to go to Southern University in Baton Rouge as she

had long admired the school's marching band and hoped to be chosen as a Dancing Doll.

Although the novel is set in Atlanta, Georgia, during the 21st century, it covers three generations. Dana's mother initially had dreamt only about marriage. Hers was a generation that got women busy in learning to be a wife. Although she knew that so much had revolutionized for Black women like her and was grateful for these new opportunities, and even though she was the very first coloured woman to hold the post as a Gift-wrap girl, it was not what she wanted to do as she never really dreamed of jobs. But time made her ambitious and sensible. When she was young, she took a few classes to learn travel-agenting, but somewhere in the mid-seventies she shifted to night courses at Atlanta Junior College to become a licensed practical nurse. With her babysitting pay, she also bought a new Commodore computer. It was always a proud feeling for her whenever she mentioned about this purchase with her own money.

Laverne, then, had the life she wanted with a husband and a daughter. She converted the garage of their house into a two-station beauty salon named 'The Pink Fox.' With the increased demand in hair styling, salons were at rise in America, with some women making four to five hundred dollars per head. The salon with its two pump chairs, shampoo bowl, and three hooded dryers, represented a generation's worth of progress from the days when Laverne sat on the front steps calling customers for her mother. By 1967, Laverne was making decent money renting a chair at a salon on Ashby Street. All because James did not know how to behave, she was not losing what she had fought hard for, although at one point she was worried about if she had to move out of the house, divorce him, and even lose the beauty shop.

When Dana was about ten, her mother wanted her to enjoy the benefits of extra tutoring in science. When James was reluctant about it, Gwen confronts, "Why not? Is it because she's a pretty girl?" "I have read that parents don't make the same investment in the minds of their good-looking daughters. Dana is an intellectual, you know" and these words had been a general stipulate for women at large (33). Despite the many restrictions and rules laid down for Dana, she had her way of doing things, of voicing out. Towards the book's end, she cuts off her beautiful hair for which she had long been admired, in parts to demonstrate that she is not going to live for the preferences of men, and for society's beauty standards.

Although history has not been kind to Black women's writing, they nonetheless acquired far greater visibility as both creator and consumer of texts that went on to

debunk literary canon formation. As a way out from the long-term consequences that racism, sexism, and classism have on the lives of African American women, Jones stalwartly believes that it is imperative to change the echelon of feminism by being more inclusive of differences and changing the perspective of binary oppositions, as well as incorporating evenhandedness, empathy, and respecting multiplicity.

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Happy Session

Lo! The flock of birds meeting
At this spacious roof so vocal
Expressing their weal and woe
On this unmanned solitary zone.

Lo! The speakers drawing attention
Of the assembled guests so chic
With their distinct buzz and pose
Keeping the podium vibrant
Throughout the session
That all glue to the hall
Till the light dims.

Lo! The flock departing now
With the dwindling of sunrays
For their respective sweet shelter
Collecting a lot of pleasure and lessons
From this refreshing session to return
And unite again with their dearest nestlings.

Man and Machine

Say not nay to offers of device
But let not it demean human price
Time and energy are saved much thru' pay online
But still human contact is there like a blessed sunshine;
Shopping can be done now sitting indoor thru' Amazon
But until entered into a bazaar how can one enjoy human tone?

Say not nay to offers of device
But let not it banish human cries
That rain spontaneous as a solidarity with fellow beings
This is missing even from the latest robotic offspring.

Say not nay to offers of device
But let not it get you slave or make you unwise
Let's foster a harmony between man and machine
Yes, this is the key to stay updated and live life evergreen.

Job Status

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she rises early, opens gate and cleans premises

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she makes daily breakfast, lunch and dinner and serves all

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she nurses her ailing mother-in-law punctually without fail

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she teaches kids and makes them reach school thru' rain and sun

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she does all laundry works day after day for the family

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she receives mails, watches on all entries and exits round the clock

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

But she worships household deities as a devout priest with no break

Her job status shows that she serves nowhere

Is earning money the only criterion to be in service?

Why works are paid little or no value that charges no fees

A question, a big question indeed for all- living in this 21st century.

A Query

Often I ponder in wonder
Seeing people preferring mobile
To talking face to face with those
That is staying even at next door.

Often I am clueless
To unscrew the bizarre acts
Of people sitting close in a sofa
Chatting for half an hour on laptops
But not seeing eyes to eyes for a second.

Is it due to dependency on machine?
Or a sign of fall of the warmth of relationships
Or for a surge of commercialization of life
Than banking on eternal relation
Of mutual love and respect?

– Biswanath Kundu*

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When Silence is Deafening

I did what they asked me to do
Said it was for my best
To obey their decision
To trust and leave the rest

Then one day they came for me
Everyone around was joyous
They said I finally got a new home
And I never questioned the need to leave mine

I was told to start a new life
To abide by the norms and be a good wife
I was trained to adjust
Even if things done to me felt unjust

I thought love could never be bought,
Not true; newer demands were sought
If they were met, things remained good
If not, I was reminded of my womanhood

My hopes of happiness were shattered
With the piercing blows of demands,
My self-respect was crushed
Every time with a raise of hand

My pleas were drowned
My requests were rejected
I was done playing by the rules
I was done with my life being torn

I longed to come back
But they said what will others say
There is a reputation to behold
And was sent back to do as I was told

I wanted to be happy
Was that too much to ask?
I decided to take a different path
One many think but a few choose

I stood there, firm as a mountain
A frail one, you might think
But resolute nevertheless
I sought justice till it was delivered

Now you want my forgiveness
To save your reputation
Looking at me with hope
Pleading to forget your actions

I think back to those days
When your shouts were thundering
And know that today
My silence is deafening

– Sandhya Shankar*

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She

The predator is in mask
All set ready to hunt
And wait for dusk
Teeth and nails sharpened.

She is dragged into the woods,
Behind the bushes; inside the temple
He did on her until he is done,
And they did on her until she is gone
Screamed!
Sobbed then and silenced.

Left with her are, the years of endless trauma
Succumbed!
Ending all pointless drama
Stages the plethora of candles and hashtags
Lined up in the morgue
Eventually fold their flags.

She is stripped off her name, even.
An unknown now
A soul unwilling to die.

A far cry from the cradle, me too!
Mumbled she,
Are the days far off to, you too?
And I too!

The Search

Is there a poet ever born without an unbroken heart
that it bleeds from within,
What could be as intense as an un-expressed emotion,
that dies poignant and uncorrupted?

Is there a sword ever made that pierces as deep as
those words hurt, that can't be undone,
What could be as painful as one's good-bye,
that steals what is still attached to it?

Is there a chain that bound the duos tight
that ever remained untied,
What could stay as strong as that's
unbound of the chains of bondage?

What could be as divine as an un-said love
that attains eternity; a virgin forever.
In search of the unknowns, the soul still dives
into the depths of the most unexplored; the Truth!

– Saraswathy Selvarajan*

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Search for Home

Is it the sense of belongingness to an indeterminate horizon?

Is it the rootedness in a specific geographical location?

What is it that provides meaning to 'home'?

What gives 'home' a sense, an existence?

For some, home transcends the physicality of self,

For others, home gives the sense of identity,

Rooted deep in its very presence...

'Home' and its varied interpretations...

Find a place in literary and cultural theory,

Its meaning is contested from varied perspectives in philosophy...

It echoes within the conceptualization of self to 'being-in the world'
from Socratic ideas to its phenomenological sense...

Home and the associated 'belongingness' do exist in eternity...

Where the existence gets tied to emotionality,

And home becoming a mental experience, a state of mind...

Where hidden potentialities and creative energies unfold,

Transforming it into a space of emotion and memory...

When by-lanes of memory encapsulates 'home'

In this search for home and its meaning...

Millions are in the state of homelessness...

Fleeing war, persecution and violence...

Remaining in persistent hopelessness...

Gathering up all courage to find some solace...

Their undaunted spirit searches for a home...

In an unending world, no place to call one's own...

Same is the story of a woman...
When the self gets torn between parental and marital home...
In between, she might not get a room to call her own...
Amidst the conflict of interests and claims...
What one owns and what one doesn't...
'Search' never ends....
It continues...
Till the body transforms into ashes...
Or gets subsumed by earth's patches...
And gets to know that home is nowhere...
Not in this world....

– Tauseef Fatima*

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